

Our Rational Faith

DODGE

Library of The Theological Seminary

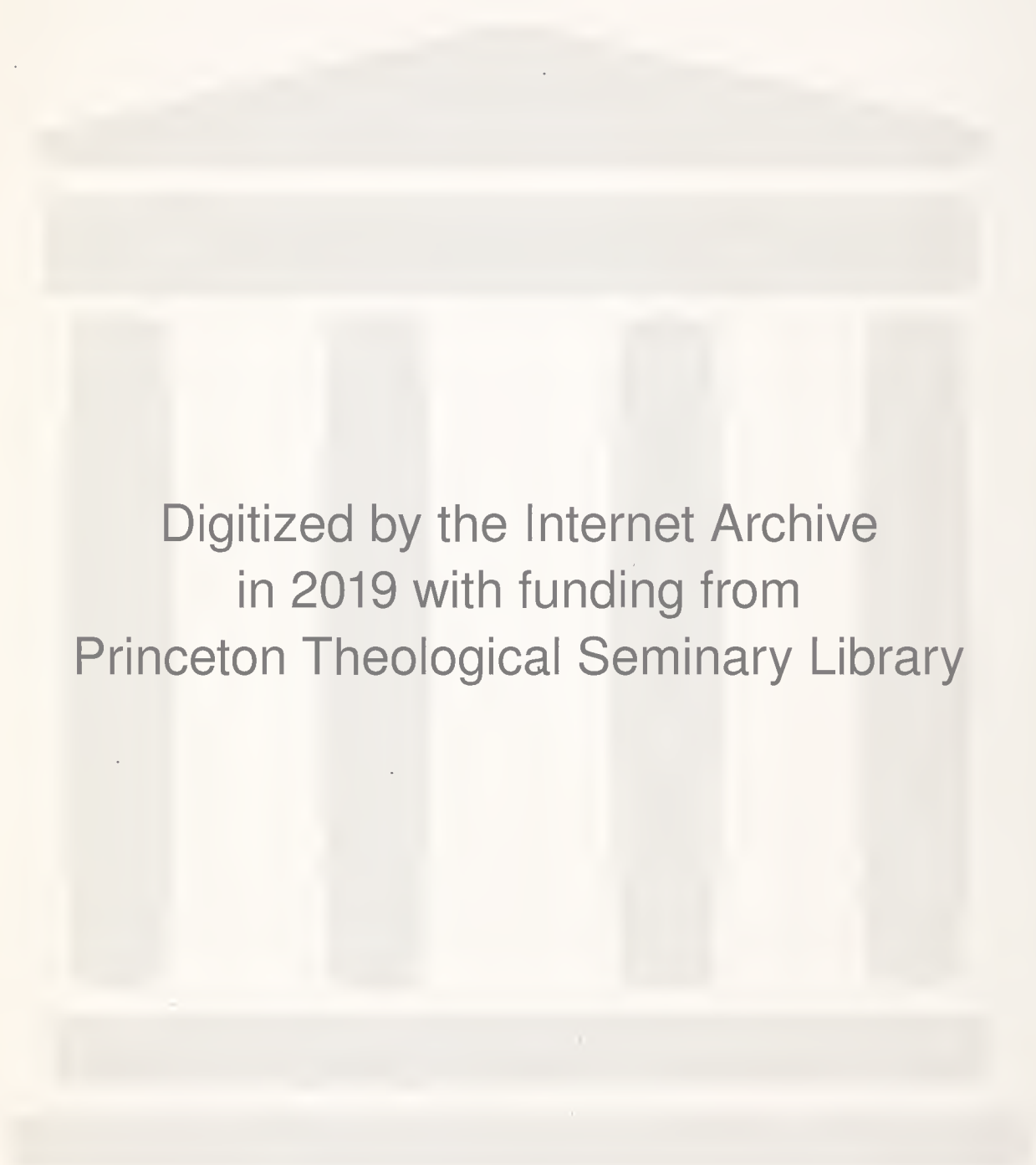
PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



FROM THE LIBRARY OF
ROBERT ELLIOTT SPEER



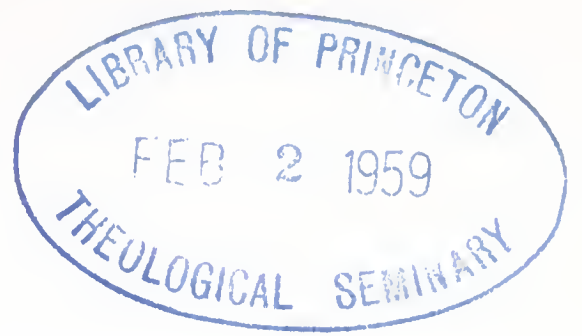
BT75 .D623
Dodge, Richard D.,
Our rational faith



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

OUR RATIONAL FAITH





Our Rational Faith

By

REV. RICHARD D. DODGE

Pastor First Presbyterian Church,
Logan, West Virginia

Published by
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION
Richmond, Va.

COPYRIGHT 1923
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

To my Father and Mother

Reverend William Henry Dodge, D. D.

and

Sallie Witherspoon Dodge

Who found in Christ Jesus all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God and from whose lips and lives I learned to know Him and to love Him, this little volume is affectionately inscribed.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. FAITH REASONABLE	7
II. THE GOOD MAN	23
III. THE GREAT TEACHER	37
IV. THE DEITY OF CHRIST	53
V. THE INCARNATION	72
VI. MIRACLES	90
VII. THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS	106
VIII. RAISED IN POWER	123
IX. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST	143
X. LORD AND MASTER	161

Foreword

THE purpose of the chapters which make up this little volume is to present those doctrines of the Christian religion which have found general acceptance with the Christian Church of all ages in such a manner as to appeal to the reason of the many thousands of earnest thinking men and women, young and old, who are in search of the truth. It is not written for those who already have a firm hold on the faith, but for those who are experiencing difficulty in bringing these doctrines into line with the demands of the Reason. The author has endeavored throughout to steer clear of technical terms with which the theological student would be familiar, but which would have no practical meaning to the mind not trained in their use. These studies are intended to be constructive, not destructive; conciliatory, not controversial; to build up, not to tear down. If they shall succeed in helping any one to a clearer faith and to find in Jesus Christ their Ideal, their Companion, their Friend, their Lord and Master, the author will feel deeply grateful to that same Christ for having been enabled to render some little help to some earnest, seeking soul. R. D. D.

Logan, West Virginia,
November 26, 1922.

FAITH REASONABLE

“Ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.”—*1 Peter 3:15.*

THERE is a fable of two kings of old who went to war with each other over an imaginary disagreement. After waging bloody warfare for many years, so the fable goes, during which time property of incalculable value and priceless treasures were destroyed and thousands of lives were sacrificed, casting a pall over every household in the two kingdoms, one night one of the kings dreamed that a messenger came to him from his enemy inquiring as to the cause of this awful state of affairs—and he was speechless. He could recall no definite reason why the two kingdoms had gone to war. It seemed to him in his dream that there was really no cause for the prosecution of the war. On awaking the following morning he was the one who sent the messenger to arrange a meeting with the king of the hostile nation to discuss plans for peace. After spending but a short time in conference it was discovered that in reality there was no point of disagreement, but that the long warfare which had been carried on had arisen over a misunderstanding of the motives of one another.

This fable finds its counterpart in real life in the unceasing warfare that has been, and continues to be carried on among scholars and laymen over the imaginary incompatibility between Faith and Reason. The

idea is prevalent among many that immediately the preacher mentions the word Faith we cut the ropes and depart into the thin air of mysticism and the realms of ghosts and fantasies. And, because such an idea is current and is being propagated, a great many who have not a sufficient amount of reason to hold their balance are capsized, their faith is swamped in a sea of doubts, and they become hopelessly lost, when a slight ability to see things in their proper perspective would save them.

The purpose of the present chapter is to lay down one postulate, by an elucidation of which to dispel this illusion. The postulate is this: That there exists no incompatibility between Faith and Reason, each having its own functions to perform, in the performance of which the two become mutually helpful. We might illustrate this point roughly by a glance at the operation of man's five senses. By means of his sense of smell he comes into possession of certain knowledge. By means of his sense of touch he comes into possession of other information, different in character but not contradictory. And so with the other senses. Each operates in its own sphere acquiring knowledge which is true but diverse and incomplete. By a synthesis of the various sets of facts we arrive at a complete knowledge of the subject under examination. Now the sense of smell cannot say to the sense of touch "I have no need of you;" neither can the hearing say to the tasting or the seeing "I have no need of you." There is a need of each one, and by all working together full knowledge is obtained. In some such way Faith and

Reason may be said to operate; each at work in its own sphere and imparting information, accurate but partial. It is by a synthesis of the knowledge derived from the two that we possess a full and true knowledge of life. Both are children of the same Father, even God, who is a God, not of chaos and confusion but of law and order. It is unreasonable to suppose that such a Creator would bring into existence and endow the crown of His creative works, Man, with two faculties contradictory the one to the other.

It may help us to see our way more clearly later on if we stop here to notice two or three facts which are self-evident.

The first of these facts is that there is a limit to man's powers of reasoning as there is to all of his other powers. Man lives under the mandate "thus far shalt thou go and no farther." We can go some distance by means of our physical senses, but there is a limit beyond which they cannot carry us. The impressions which they receive must be carried to the brain by the nerves. The brain must then weigh these impressions, thus carrying us a little further. The reason takes up the work, and carries us forward to certain conclusions. Here it seems that we must stop. But must we? No, for there are other ways of arriving at results than by logical processes. For instance, the intuition of woman. The more logical man makes his way slowly from one premise to another and thence to a conclusion, but when he arrives he finds woman waiting for him, having taken the shorter cut which her intuition affords her. Stalker reminds us also of the fact that "there are

indications that other animals possess senses by which they discern some things not perceived by us. For instance, changes of weather appear to be anticipated by certain animals before they dawn upon the human faculties (even with the aid of scientific instruments), and the marvelous power exhibited by carrier-pigeons and lost cats and dogs to find their way home, suggest something of the same kind." Psychologists, too, have shown that the affections and the will serve to contribute a large share of the knowledge which we possess. These facts speak to us of the provision which the Creator in His wisdom has made to supply the deficiency of a limited reason.

The second fact to be noticed is that, not only is there a limit to the power of reasoning in man, but this limit varies among different men. In a large portion of the human race this faculty is of very narrow range; in others it is more fully developed, and in others still it is very highly developed. So that, what would seem to be entirely unreasonable to one man may be very simple to one whose power of reasoning has attained a higher state of development. A proposition in mathematics may seem beyond all reason to the young student, whereas the same proposition will be solved without the slightest difficulty by the trained college professor.

Nor must we neglect the part which experience plays in the development of our understanding. Reasoning is not merely an intellectual process, but bears a vital relation to experience as well. For instance, if a native of the Fiji Islands were told that men had made a machine which was capable of carrying them over

ground or through space at the rate of one hundred and thirty miles an hour the savage would be absolutely incapable of comprehending such a statement. Or, if our forefathers, intellectual men as many of them undoubtedly were, had been told that their sons would be able to hear one another's voices with perfect distinctness at a distance of hundreds of miles with no wires to carry the sound waves, they would have regarded such a statement as a wild dream. These facts which are perfectly intelligible to us are unintelligible to the savage or our noble ancestors for the simple reason that they are within our experience and beyond theirs.

If now we enter another realm of life we find an apt illustration of this truth awaiting us. One woman will wear her fingers to the bone toiling from early morn till late at night long after the rest of the household are sound asleep; she will deny herself those things which go to make life more enjoyable; she will sacrifice her own pleasure, her health, even her very life for the sake of her children. To another woman, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, such a life of sacrifice and devotion is incomprehensible. The first woman is a mother, and every thought, every action is prompted by mother love. The second woman is a selfish woman of the world who has never experienced the noble sentiments of her sister. The life of sacrifice and toil is beyond reason to her because the motives prompting it are without the range of her experience.

The Apostle Paul voices this truth in its application to the spiritual side of man's being, when he writes the Corinthian Christians that "the natural man receiveth

not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged." In other words, the things of the Spirit of God are incomprehensible to the man who has never had any experience of the grace and mercy of God. He whose heart is stained with sin can have no adequate understanding nor just appreciation of the holiness of God. Only the pure in heart can be see-ers of God; to them, and to them alone, is vouchsafed the vision of the Almighty. So that, while the man of the world cannot by searching nor by reason find out God, the child can, by faith, behold the face of his Father.

We have seen that man's reason is limited, and that the power of the reason varies in individual men according to training and experience. It remains to mention our third self-evident fact of experience, viz; that there are a great many phenomena, incapable of being fathomed by the reason, which are nevertheless accepted as true and appropriated in our daily lives. One or two illustrations will suffice to set this clearly before us. Psychologists have been unable thus far to explain the operation of the mind in the exercise of the memory, the imagination or the reason itself. Nevertheless, we all persist in calling up the past, and it stands vividly before us: we continue to give free play to our imagination, and revel in the delightful anticipations it affords us, or shrink from the gruesome possibilities with which it may invest the future: we do not cease to exercise our powers of reason every hour of the day, and either abide by its conclusions or act contrary to them. Nor have we been told yet just how our mental and spiritual

faculties act upon that which is physical and material; nevertheless we continue to talk and eat, to carry on our business and move our bodies whithersoever we will. Physiologists have been able to understand comparatively little about the circulation of the blood in the human body, but we do not all insist upon dying because we do not understand how we live. Edison tells us that we are in our infancy in our understanding of electricity, and yet we light our streets, drive our cars, send our messages and do a thousand other things with this mysterious quantity which we call electricity. Because, therefore, the reason cannot always be satisfied, we are not to conclude that only that which does satisfy it is true.

Having said thus much as to the inadequacy of reason unaided to arrive at the full truth, it will be well for us to address ourselves to the opposite tendency, that, namely, which relegates reason to the dark recesses or else consigns it to oblivion. We might designate this tendency as that of a blind, unreasoning and bigoted credulity. It would be a difficult task to say which had wrought the greatest havoc to the Christian faith—the insistent demand for the satisfaction of the Reason, or the unthinking, unwise acceptance of that which is plainly unreasonable.

Men of today are democratic in temper. They are no longer willing to accept things simply because men have always accepted them. Nor is the modern man willing to take things on authority. He asks what constitutes authority, and the man who is willing to stand upon authority is hard put to it to tell just what he is

standing upon. He claims the right to his own judgment, and by his own judgment he is willing to stand or fall. Tradition may wear a hoary head, but it is not always found in the way of righteousness, and consequently does not always receive honor from the modern man. Faith and doctrine must either stand or fall upon their own merits, not upon the authority of church councils nor the *ex cathedra* of popes. Each man does his own thinking, arrives at his own conclusions and abides by the results. The opinion of the majority is not necessarily most in accord with the truth. The *vox populi* is not necessarily the *vox Dei*. We have been taught by a certain class of men who have appropriated to themselves the title of "free thinkers," to regard ourselves as "bound thinkers," held by the shackles of certain beliefs, and who must do our thinking only within certain limits. The infidel has no right to arrogate to himself and his kind the title of "free-thinkers." Every honest man is a free thinker in the true sense of the word. A free thinker is simply a man who thinks independently with a mind open to receive the light from whatever source it may emanate, and to follow the truth wheresoever it may lead him. Any man who is not willing to shift ground when the truth convinces him of error is a dishonest man and an untrustworthy guide. The modern man is a free thinker in the sense of the word just described, and as such must command respect. The honest seeker after truth may be compelled to cast aside much that he has been taught and that time has honored, because he has found that it is but trash, but he is on the road

which leads to larger truth, and his final achievements will vindicate the course he has pursued.

The situation thus created by our modern man with his democratic temperament, his insistence upon the right to do his own thinking, is an exceedingly interesting one. It may be a tree which brings forth good fruit or a tree which brings forth bad fruit. Certain it is that we may judge it by its fruit. It is a very easy matter to abuse privilege, to change freedom into license. Unless carefully guarded this liberty of thought may lead to license of thought, and license of thought will usually lead to license of morals, so that the larger the number of such thinkers the more danger there will be to society. Again, this spirit may lead to a neglect in the training of the young from the fear of binding their minds by notions wrought into them during those early years when the mind is most impressionable and most retentive. Thus a race of intellectual and spiritual weaklings would result.

On the other hand the good fruits which this tree is bringing forth are manifold. It is only so that expression can be given to individuality. Every man becomes a man, not a slave. The world looks upon the truth through a million pairs of eyes instead of one. Instead of a world of imitators, and, in a sense, plagiarists, we will have a world of original thinkers; every man will be, in his own degree, a genius. There is nothing which the average man so despises as an intellectual parrot who can only speak words another has placed in his mouth: there is nothing which the average man so admires as a distinct personality. He may disagree

in conclusions reached, but he respects the opinion of the man who does his own thinking, and who, when he speaks, utters thoughts his own. Again, here lies the secret of all progress. The ship which is held by a heavy anchor and strong cable stands still. The mind which is held by chains of preconceived notions is doomed to die of strangulation. Had Martin Luther never revolted against the bigotry of the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century the world would be centuries behind the point to which it has progressed. Luther declared the right of every man to read and interpret the Bible for himself, and denied the right of popes and church councils to say that their interpretation must be accepted as infallible and authoritative. If the medical profession denied the right of private research and investigation to its followers, we would be still amputating limbs without administering an anaesthetic, and treating typhoid fever with tea of herbs. Had science shut the door upon her lovers and forbidden them to explore and do original thinking, we would still believe that the earth was the center of the universe, and that there were only four elements. The democratic temper is the sole hope of progress in any branch of learning. And it is so because it furnishes an incentive to thoughtful examination and original investigation. If an idea is established as true forever and beyond the possibility of change, then we might as well have done with our efforts, and place them to some better purpose than in trying to establish that which has already been forever settled.

Now, as to which of these results which ensue from the demand to freedom of thought is of greater weight it will not be hard to determine. We have only to examine the constructive work that is being done by the men who make this demand. The contributions that are daily being made to the thought of the world are certainly sufficient to relieve us of any anxiety regarding the production of a race of intellectual or spiritual weaklings. Such a condition of affairs will be produced more quickly and more surely by the overcredulous who accept every idea and doctrine simply because it bears the stamp of antiquity or popularity without making any attempt at verification or refutation. It is only by the exercise of Reason in the spiritual world that mankind can be saved from spiritual stagnation.

Let me say just a word at this point with reference to the critical movement which has been bulking so large in the theological world during the last generation. There is a strong prejudice in the minds of many against anything with which the word "criticism" is connected, and especially Higher Criticism. It is looked upon as the handmaid of the devil and the offspring of hell. Such a view could not possibly be farther from the truth, as will be seen when it is once learned what Higher criticism really is and what it does. Mead, in *Christ and Criticism*, describes "genuine criticism" as "nothing but the search after truth; and of this there cannot be too much," he adds. Henry Churchill King in his *Reconstruction in Theology* defines Higher Criticism as "a careful historical and

literary study of a book to determine its unity, age, authorship, literary form and reliability." What fair minded man who is a true inquirer after truth can raise objection to such a study of God's Word? If the Bible cannot stand under the searching fires of criticism then we do not want to rest our faith upon it. In the light of the history of the movement it is safe to say that we need not become uneasy about that upon which our faith hangs. It is only necessary to know something of the spirit and life of some who are regarded as critics of the Bible to be convinced that they are not hopeless heretics and unbelievers. I quote a portion of an address by George Adam Smith, one of the liberal but not radical critics, delivered at the Edinburgh Sabbath Morning Fellowship Union, taken from Johnston's *Bible Criticism and the Average Man*. In speaking of the Bible and the person and work of Jesus Dr. Smith said, "Biblical Criticism has been indulged in within the last generation with a vigour and a freedom that were never known before. And we have to ask ourselves, What is the loss of it, or what is the gain? One might answer this question by examining the history we have, and especially of Europe, and noting how it has been the Bible, and the Bible alone, which has cleansed the social life, inspired new nations to independence, which has built the home, which has perfected the beginnings of education, which has brought health to art and literature, which has enlightened the ignorant, ennobled the humble, and given the lonely man power to stand alone for truth and justice, and which, above all, has inspired a power to every century, given

it an energy and a hope to struggle for truth which nothing else could possibly have endowed it with.

“That has been the work of the Bible. It is not an instrument that has not been tried. It has been tried during nineteen centuries of progress, and never once has it lost its edge during that time. The criticism of today is not directed to the historical trustworthiness of the Bible, so much as to its moral validity, and this subject gives rise to difficulties and to doubts. We have to say the solution of this moral problem is to be found within the pages of the Bible itself. God has granted in His Sermon on the Mount that God’s revelation must be a progressive revelation. Do not let us do the Bible the childish injustice of judging it by things which the spirit of the Bible shows its great victory to be in outgrowing and defeating. Do not let us condemn the Bible for practices which we find its greatest prophets themselves condemning. Let us rather measure it by the divine unity of ethical purpose which runs through it from first to last, which never fails through age after age, and which proves itself to be the work of God, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is difficulty about the question as to how far the miracle proved the word divine. I would have you see that while our Lord wrought the miracle, He rebuked those who followed Him for the miracle only. It is the Word, and its power to give life to the soul, that is the miracle.

“What is it that gives this Word its power? It is not the moral idea that it lays bare to us. It is not in the showing of two worlds which expose the necessity

of a moral choice between them and the warfare involved in that choice. But the divine essence of the Bible consists in this—the marvelous story, how it tells us that that moral warfare of ours is shared by God Himself, that the divine nature descended into that warfare, that it bears the agony of strife—nay, the shame and curse of it all!—all of man's salvation. In the Old Testament, God is represented, not as judicial righteousness, but as righteousness militant and suffering. For our salvation He descended from heaven and by His loving pity redeemed us. That love and pity were vicarious. The human heart is scarcely capable of understanding the height and depth of the task undertaken by our Lord, by the divine and perfect love itself.

“These are the prophecies in the Old Testament of the Incarnation that we read of in the New. That is the preparation for the appearance of the Son of God in our flesh, our weakness, tempted in all points like as we are, bearing our sickness, carrying our sorrows, and finally, as St. Peter tells us, bearing in His own body our own sins upon the tree. Because the Bible alone of all books in the world has that story of divine love to tell, we know the Bible to be the Word of God. Not that it fits the older theories of inspiration, but that, independently of all human theories of inspiration, it carries home to the hearts and consciences and souls of sinful men, that otherwise would remain in sin but for this strange and almost incredible story of God's love, God's sacrifice and agony for them. It therefore carries that story home to their hearts and souls, needing no proof for itself, appealing only in its own

strength. That is why the Bible shall always be the indispensable force to man's salvation, the one so unique and conspicuous, the great divine power for man's salvation in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Study your Bible for this alone, and believe in it because it gives to you this naked truth of God's love." Surely a man of the highest type of scholarship, as Dr. Smith unquestionably is, who holds such views of God's book and God's Son cannot lead men astray very far from the truth.

It is unfortunately true that a great many of the critics are not as loyal as Dr. Smith to the fundamentals of the faith, true that a great many assertions have been made which are incapable of substantiation and destructive in their nature. We must, therefore, make distinctions in speaking of and in judging the critics. We are under a vast debt to these men who have labored so assiduously and so conscientiously to lead us into the truth, and it is only fair to acknowledge it. Let us give honor unstintedly to whom honor is due.

One word more needs to be said before we bring this chapter to a close. There is a conviction deep rooted in many that everything that is supernatural is, by reason of that fact, contrary to Reason. And, since there is so much in the Christian religion which not only appears, but claims to be, of a supernatural character, a great barrier to faith is set up. This conviction rules out everything which gives indication of the direct, active, personal operation of a living God. It proceeds upon the assumption that God has completed the work which demands His presence in the world

today. Consequently, because the Incarnation of the Son of God is supernatural, it is contrary to Reason, and therefore, could not have occurred. Because the performance of miracles involves the active operation of God, no miracles were performed. Because the Resurrection necessitated the participation of God supernaturally, Jesus never rose from the dead. In order to show the fallacy of this position it is only necessary to remind its advocates that every tiny seed germinates and produces the flower and the tree only by the operation of God; that every birth of animal or man tells us that the Creator is still at work in His world. The supernatural is oftentimes beyond the range of Reason, but not therefore contrary to it and necessarily untrue. We return, then, to reiterate and emphasize the postulate with which we began, that there exists no incompatibility between Faith and Reason, but that each has its God-given work to do, in the faithful performance of which the two become mutually helpful. God has given us the Reason for a grand and noble purpose, thus separating us from the lower orders of creation and making us like unto Himself. And He expects us to make the best use possible of it. He has also endowed us with Faith to be for us "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." He has not given us the Reason to do away with the necessity of the higher quality, nor has He given us Faith to save us the trouble of using our Reason.

CHAPTER II.

THE GOOD MAN

“Who went about doing good.”—*Acts 10: 38.*

“Some said, He is a good man.”—*John 7: 12.*

THERE are two things about the Christian Faith concerning which the Reason has never experienced the slightest difficulty. That men have had no trouble in regard to these two facts is proven by the fact that wherever the life of Jesus is known, men have always been willing to acknowledge their truth. The first of these facts is, that Jesus has presented to the consciousness of men of every age and every race, the grandest, the noblest, the most sublime and the most transcendent moral character the world has ever seen. The second fact is this, that nowhere can there be found one whose teachings can compare in depth of insight, breadth of range, noble dignity, unsullied purity, infallible accuracy and transforming power with the words of the Man of Nazareth. He is the world's supreme religious teacher by common consent. The purpose of the present chapter is to set forth clearly the first of these two universally accepted facts concerning Him whom the world calls the peasant of Galilee, but whom the Christian rejoices to worship as Lord and Master.

If we would be logical we should begin with the inner and work outward. The external life which men see is always but the expression of the character of the soul which dwells within. Now regarding this char-

acter, believer and unbeliever, Christian and non-Christian, Jew and Gentile, saint and sinner all agree. Very few have had the courage to affirm that there was any flaw to be found in it. "By universal consent His character is the world's ideal, matchless and shining with a glory undimmed through the years," says Howard Agnew Johnston, a thorough Evangelical. "Jesus is the most perfect of all men that have yet appeared," testifies Ralph Waldo Emerson, a Unitarian. "Jesus is our divinest symbol. Higher has the human thought not yet reached. A symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into and anew made manifest," is the tribute which Thomas Carlyle pays to the character of Jesus. James Anthony Froude looking at Him through the eyes of the historian witnesses that "The most perfect being who has ever trod the soil of this planet was called the Man of Sorrows." Says Pecaut, "Christ's moral character rose beyond comparison above that of any other great man of antiquity. No one was ever so gentle, so humble, so kind as He. In His spirit He lived in the house of His heavenly Father. His moral life is wholly penetrated by God. He was the Master of all, because He was really their brother." Among philosophers of the highest rank we find this word from the lips of John Stuart Mill; "Who among His disciples or among their Proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings of Jesus, or imagining the life and character ascribed to Him? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different

sort; and still less the early Christian writers. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to His mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve his life."

We need not multiply quotations farther. All center around the thought that the world's ideal character is to be found nowhere save in that which the Man of Galilee has given to it.

Since the modern man is not as ready to make his decisions and form his conclusions upon what others have said or thought or felt, albeit those others represent the acme of the world's thought, it will be well for us to make investigations of our own, and by them to form our own estimate of the excellence of this character.

Jesus is continually held up before us by his admirers and worshippers as a sinless personality. Sinlessness stands for moral purity and the absence of all stain of evil. To his own consciousness evidently Jesus was a sinless man. We find him teaching other men to include in their prayers a petition for forgiveness of sin, but we do not find such a petition in any of His own prayers. We hear the words with which He began His ministry calling men to repentance for sins, yet we

have no record of His having repented of any sin. Evidently He never felt that He needed to repent. On more than one occasion we see Him forgiving sin in others. Had He been conscious of standing in need of forgiveness Himself, He could never have claimed the power to forgive sin in others. When He had roused the hatred of the Jews by telling them that they were the children of the devil, fearlessly, without fear of contradiction or of being proven guilty, He asks, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" is the way in which He speaks of the influence which Satan has over Him. There is to His consciousness no point of contact between Himself and the evil one. It is true that evil lurks concealed within us, and it may be said that the same was true of Jesus, but it is unreasonable to suppose that one who could discern the presence of the slightest taint of evil in other men and who could forgive the sin which he perceived, would be unable to recognize sin in Himself had it been there. Although tempted in all points like as we are, feeling the same strain of sin upon his heart, nevertheless He maintained His spotlessness of character intact.

The sinlessness of the Man Jesus glows with the white light of perfection and holiness when tested by every standard. In fact, the more searching the criticism and examination to which that character is subjected, the brighter shines the excellence of it. Tested by the standard of fidelity to the will of His Father we find that in no one particular does He deviate from the straight edge which this standard furnishes. He

was never in such a hurry as to be unwilling to await God's time. "My time has not yet come" were words constantly upon His lips; that is, the time which the Father had appointed for any particular revelation of Himself. He was in no rush to do His own will contrary to the will of God. It is one of the mysteries of this personality, that, knowing the mission which was His, being conscious of divine powers possessed, aggravated almost beyond endurance by the faithlessness and hard-heartedness of the people whom He had come to redeem, He never exhibits the slightest impatience to await the will of His Father. Trench sings so beautifully,

"He might have reared a palace at a word,
 Who sometimes had not where to lay His head.
 Time was when He who nourished crowds with bread,
 Would not one meal unto Himself afford.
 He healed another's scratch; His own side bled;
 Side, hands and feet with cruel piercings gored.
 Twelve legions girded with angelic sword
 Stood at His beck, the scorned and buffeted.

"Oh, wonderful the wonders left undone!
 Yet not more wonderful than those He wrought!
 Oh, self-restraint, surpassing human thought!
 To have all power, yet be as having none!
 Oh, self-denying love, that thought alone
 For needs of others, never for its own."

Thus, when led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, He went relying upon the will of His Father and obedient thereto. Thrice did the devil tempt Him to turn aside from the path which the Father had laid out for Him, and thrice did He come forth victorious, loyal to Him whose will He came to accomplish. Weak

from His long fast, the tempter comes with the proposition that the way to show that He was the child of God was by miraculously feeding His hungry body, the implication being that He had better make provision for Himself and not rely upon God to minister to Him; but Jesus reminds Him that "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," in other words, that He is not dependent for life upon mere bread, but upon the will of His Father. Then He is led into the city and placed upon a parapet of the temple, and the temptation comes to take liberties with God, and win the favor of the people by casting Himself down from that dizzy height upon the pavement below and rising unhurt. Thus would He gain followers at a stroke by showing to the people that He was miraculously cared for, instead of winning them one by one in the way that God had appointed. A third time a thrust is made at the fidelity of Jesus to the will of the Father. Showing to Him the kingdoms of the world which He had come to possess and to reign over, these are promised in return for the simple act of worshiping the devil. The long hard way of the cross would be unnecessary. The object may be gained without all that suffering. Why cling to the will of God which requires sacrifice and death when you can have the object of your desires by simply doing what I say? Triumphantly the Man comes forth from this triple test of His loyalty to His Father.

At the close of His life the same temptation comes back upon Him with redoubled force out in the garden in the black of night. Was it really necessary for Him

to drink of the cup which was even now at His lips? Was there not some other way than that of Calvary? Must the Son of God stand in the judgment hall of Pilate, must He feel the cruel lash across His back; must He wear the mock purple and feel the thorn points upon His brow? With all of his hell-born ingenuity the devil presses home these thoughts upon Him. Nevertheless there was a radiant peace upon His face as He victoriously put His enemy to flight with the words of trust and of love, "Not my will but thine be done." He was still being led by that will which He had followed for thirty odd years.

And so, when He hung upon the cross, He could say "It is finished." He had done always "those things which were pleasing to the Father." He had finished the work which had been given Him to do. He had been true to His Father. Not once had He swerved from the path which was set before Him. Thus does the Man Jesus measure up to this standard of character—fidelity to the will of God.

A second standard by which character is judged is the estimate of values which that character forms. In what light is virtue regarded, and how is sin looked upon? In what does virtue consist? What place does it occupy in the mind and heart of the man? Is he willing to make sacrifices and endure hardship if it be necessary in order to uphold the good and suppress the bad? How does Jesus meet these requirements? We can only take up two or three points, but they will be representative ones. The manner in which He

measures up to these will indicate His attitude to all others.

Notice, for instance, the valuation which He placed upon Truth and Sincerity. He was not satisfied with an outward show of either one, but insisted upon truth in the inward parts. If there was one thing which His righteous soul rebelled against it was hypocrisy. And hypocrisy is nothing more than appearing to be what one really is not. To appear and act truthful when the soul is untruthful is hypocrisy, and Jesus condemned it in no uncertain terms. The absolute genuineness and sincerity of Jesus' character is borne in upon us as we read the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot escape it. Hear Him. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Not only must murder not be committed, but there must not be the murderous thought in the heart. Not only must we refrain from the overt act of impurity, but there must not be the lustful thought in the heart. "Truthfulness may be externalized until it is a mere matter of keeping formal oaths; but Jesus was satisfied only with a life of transparent candour, whose simplest expressions could be depended upon utterly. Philanthropic giving may be merely an ostentatious display," but "it awakened the Master's scorn,

unless it proceeded, as in Him, from a sincere care for men, delighting most in service rendered privately." Religious exercises too, such as prayer and fasting, may be done simply to receive the praise of men and the name for piety, but Jesus insisted on the entrance into the private chamber, and the secret worship of the Father there where no human eye could penetrate.

His estimate of sincerity and truth is to be gained not merely from His teachings, for it were easy to teach, but we find that He exemplified these principles in His own actions. There were times when it might have been to His advantage to have concealed a part of the truth, or to have kept silence; but He saw that either would have been to deceive, and He spoke the truth regardless of the consequences. He would not hide the truth as to the cost of discipleship even though it meant that many were to turn their backs upon Him. And when He stood before Pilate, as Fosdick has said, "He would not lie even to save Himself from the cross." Let the keenest critic with His weapons prick Him at any point, dig as deep as he likes, and he will find only genuineness and sincerity.

As another example we might take His estimate of purity. After examining His words and His life it will not be possible to say that He ever made any such compromise as to regard any form of impurity as a "necessary evil." Himself spotless, free from stain of sin, He made the condition of seeing God that one should possess a pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We have just noted

that He was not satisfied with the external show of purity, but insisted that it must penetrate to the heart.

Success in life in the eyes of Jesus consists not in the accomplishment of our own plans and the carrying out of our purposes, but in the degree to which we are willing to sacrifice self in the service of our fellow man. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world," success does not consist in that. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" because they will perish? Yes, but also because there is something higher to live for. His test of the successful life is to be found in such words as "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these" and "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." And that is just what He did. He ministered unto "the least of these" daily, and He laid down His life, not only for His friends, for He had few, but for His enemies, of whom He had many.

His scale of values was so different from the accepted estimate of men that it was nothing less than revolutionary. What value, for instance, had men placed upon the soul of man before He came to earth? If we are to judge by the customs of the day, the life and the soul of man were of little more value than the life of a dog. But He placed it first in His scale. The soul of man was the first consideration. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The saving of the soul and the development of character is the first business of man. His own mission to the world was to be a Savior of men. He "came to seek and to save the lost." And He did so, because He be-

lieved that the lost souls of men were worth saving. They were, in His judgment, of more value than His own life, and so He gave that life up that we might have life more abundantly.

Judged then by His estimate of values, the things that should have the first place, and upon which He insisted; we learn that no improvement is possible upon that estimate. No one has ever tried to improve upon it. All men accept it. It is the ideal toward which we all strive or to which we would point others.

Should we attempt to name individual virtues which may justly be ascribed to Him, it would be difficult to find a stopping place. There is no virtue in the whole catalog known to men which we do not find in Him. His sense of justice is illustrated nowhere better than in His dealing with the sinful woman whom the scribes and the Pharisees brought to Him to receive His condemnation, as recorded in the eighth of John's Gospel. While recognizing her sin, and commanding her to be guilty of it no more, He holds these religious leaders equally guilty, and under His stinging rebuke, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her," they slink away, acknowledging the truth of His charge. Jesus knew no double standard of morals. Men and women, high and low, were amenable to the same law, and an infringement by either class drew down the censure which it deserved. Decision of character is observable from the day of His baptism in Jordan until His death. The most striking instance occurs toward the close of His ministry during His passage through Perea, when He was going to

Jerusalem for the last time, knowing what awaited Him, yet having His face set like a flint, and going forward with such determination and majesty of bearing that the disciples marvelled as they followed behind Him. His gentleness appears in His treatment of every one who came to Him for aid, and His reception of the children. His hopefulness and optimism is voiced, when, in the upper room with His disciples just the night before Calvary, He bade them "be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And then that virtue which is the outgrowth of Love, Magnanimity. Almost with His dying breath, He prays the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him, because they did not know what they did. And so we might proceed indefinitely. This sinless character embodied every single virtue known to the human or divine heart; and at the same time contained not one fault. He was the pleroma of all good; the absence of all evil. No man can point the finger to any one spot in this character and say that it is weak or defective. It is a whole character, and therefore a holy one.

We mentioned in the beginning of this chapter that the external life is but the manifestation or expression of the character of the soul. We would expect, therefore, that the life and deeds of this character would be of the same nature as the character itself. Such we find to be the case. We need not dwell long upon this fact. Not only was Jesus good, but He did good. He did good not only to those who were His friends, but enemies to His work and cause came within the scope of His beneficences. The Sun of Righteousness shone

upon the good and the bad alike, the just and the unjust. He did as much for the poor man as He did for the rich. He never did less for the rich than He did for the poor. He redeemed men's bodies from the ills to which flesh and blood are subject, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, strength to the lame and halt, cleansing the leper, putting power into the paralytic, raising the dead. His work is described as three-fold, teaching, preaching and healing. Peter pictures Him accurately when he says that He was a man "who went about doing good." He redeemed men's minds, by giving them better things to think about. The thought of the world is upon a higher level today, and has been since Jesus lived, than it had ever attained before. He redeemed society wherever He went. He was no ascetic, standing aloof from men and society. He graced the wedding feast with His presence. He dined with sinners when invited to do so. He mixed and mingled with men upon the streets and in the temple. But He never descended to their level. He constantly strove to lift them up to His own level. We have only to read His table talk when a guest in the house of one of His friends recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Luke to see how He lost no opportunity of instilling into men some cardinal principle. More than all of this He redeemed souls, giving the discouraged a new hold on life, a new impulse and a fresh motive. Never once did He turn away one who came to Him for assistance or forgiveness. But He did not always wait for men to come to Him. He sought them out, as He did the impotent man whom He had healed at the pool

of Bethesda; for we are told that "afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple." In fact there was no side of man's life which Jesus did not touch, and in touching glorified it.

In view of the character which Jesus has presented to mankind, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and the active life of service which He lived for man, it is not unreasonable that we should concur in the judgment which men of all degrees of intellectual attainments, of every age and of every race where He is known have passed upon Him. Whatever else we may say about Him, or whatever else men have said about Him, surely we can say with some in His own day "He is a good man."

"Only one life there is without a stain,
Accomplishing the Father's perfect will,
With highest aim, yet never aimed in vain,
Attempting nought which must be tried again;
Even all the thoughts of God it did fulfill.

"Perfect the sinless beauty of His ways,
Perfect the wisdom of His faithful love;
Perfect the trust that walked with God always—
Perfect in suffering, perfect in the praise
Which still like incense rose to Heaven above.

"Oh, fairer thou than sons of men! and yet
Not terrible thy beauty. In sweet accord
All tender graces in thy being met,
And of their fulness all thy people get,
Still growing to the fulness of their Lord."

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT TEACHER

“Never man spake like this Man.”—*John 7: 46.*

“The multitudes were astonished at His teachings; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”—*Matt 7: 28, 29.*

WE made the statement in the beginning of *the last chapter* that there were two items of the Christian Faith concerning which the reason has never experienced any difficulty. One of those we dealt with in *the last chapter*, namely, that Jesus was the best Man known to the world. The second we shall consider in *the present chapter*, namely, that “nowhere can there be found one whose teachings can compare in depth of insight, breadth of range, noble dignity, unsullied purity, infallible accuracy and transforming power with the words of the Man of Nazareth.” Men of every century since His time have unhesitatingly conceded to Him the supreme place as a religious and moral teacher. The men of His own day, although His words pierced them through and exposed their hidden vices to the gaze of the world, could not but acknowledge that He was different from any teacher known to them, that He was unique and superior. And the men of the twentieth century stand side by side with the men of the first in according to Him a place second to none. When Prof. Romanes was coming out of the darkness of doubt into the light of certainty and assurance of faith he wrote that “in contrast with the words of other teachers, even such as Plato, the words of Jesus do not become obsolete with lapse of time—do not grow old,” that

“he did not know of any part of Christ’s teaching which the subsequent growth of human knowledge has had to discount.” There is a perennial freshness about His words which we are not able to discover in the teachings of others. Every age since His own has found in His words something new, something which had a special bearing on the life and thought of that age. Every generation has its own peculiar questions and problems which have to be answered and solved in the light of advancing knowledge, yet the minds of men instinctively go back to the pages of the Gospels in search of light on those peculiar difficulties, and never have they come away disappointed. It is not so with any other teacher. Others are men of their own age and time, and, while they did give utterance to principles and ideas which are timeless, it cannot be said that their words as a whole bear the stamp of universality as do those of Jesus.

This fact may be due in part to the isolation of the early life of Jesus. He was not a student in the schools of His day. He did not sit at the feet of the learned doctors of the law as did His Apostle Paul. His own countrymen marvelled at His wisdom, and asked the question, “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” He did not inherit the ideas and beliefs peculiar to the Hebrew people, but became rather the master of His own ideas, and because He was the universal man in His temperament, His teachings took on the character of universality. We can even go a step farther, and say that not only was He not the product of His age in character and teachings, but that He

was the contradiction of His age, not only in character, but in teachings also. We have only to read the Sermon on the Mount and note how many times He says, "Ye have heard it said . . . but *I* say unto you," and how the words that He said gave expression to ideas which were in a sense revolutionary. For instance, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time" that a man shall not murder his fellow man, "but *I* say unto you" that murder consists not only in taking the actual life of man but in the hatred which exists in the heart toward any man. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time" that a man had done his duty when he loved his neighbor, and might then hate his enemy with a good conscience, "but *I* say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Those were new conceptions. We do not find them in the literature of the time nor of the years previous to that in which Jesus lived. It is as a voice speaking out of the darkness, giving utterance not only to that which is novel, but also to that which is nobler. For every innovation made by Jesus was for the better; it added something of value to the store of the world's ideas and ideals.

A remarkable fact about the teachings of Jesus is that they have exerted a more powerful influence over the thought and life of the world than the words of all other ethical and religious teachers combined, and yet we know of only one line that He wrote, and that upon the shifting sands. Leaders of thought nowadays exert their greatest influence possibly by the printed

page. The voice can reach thousands, but the book can touch millions. Jesus never wrote a book, but His simple words have produced more books than the combined writings of any ten of the world's greatest thinkers. We should remember too that the period of His teaching ministry covered only three years. Ordinarily it requires more than three years for a teacher to gain a hearing for himself. Every word which He spoke produced a profound effect, it exerted an unmistakable influence.

We spoke a moment ago of the powerful influence which the teachings of Jesus have exerted over the mind and customs and practices of men. We need only take a rapid review of the history of the nations and their customs since His day, and note the changes which have taken place under the working of His teachings according as those teachings have permeated the social life of the nations.

Until the spirit of Jesus had touched life in Rome, during the early centuries of the Christian era, during the Middle Ages, we find woman in a state of degradation, the tool and toy of man; marriage was a thing of convenience, to be entered into tentatively and thoughtlessly, to be dissolved at the wish of the stronger party; personal purity was a term hardly known; human life, especially that of children, more especially that of baby girls, had little if any value. But it requires but a touch of the Man of Galilee, but a ray of the light of His teachings to change forever these conceptions. Wherever Jesus goes woman becomes an object of love and adoration and respect; the marriage tie becomes

sacred, personal purity a necessity in the life of respected men and women, and the child one of the centers of life. Slavery is another of these creatures of darkness which flees before the brightness of the moral purity of Jesus' teachings. He never said a word in condemnation of slavery as an institution, but yet it has not failed to be the case in a single instance that upon the entrance of His life and spirit into the life of men who practiced slavery that institution quickly disappeared. How was it in Rome? How was it in Europe? How was it in America? How is it in heathen lands today? The history is ever the same. In Christ there is neither bond nor free. Before the spirit of the teachings of Jesus the barbarous custom of conducting civil trials by ordeal and of extracting confession by torture has disappeared. These things were regarded as just and right until a higher law exerted its influence in the hearts of men when they saw with clearer eyes, and banished them. We might go on to mention the disappearance of the duel, of intemperance, of blood revenge, of the wild life of feudalism, and the reaction against the horrors of war which have been brought about by the spreading of the leaven of Jesus' words.

On the other hand there rises up a long pathway of glory lighted by institutions and works of beneficence and love in the wake of the ever advancing spirit of Christ. We can trace the progress of Christian teachings by the evidences of purity and uplift of education, by the "blessed associations of mercy, the hospitals, the asylums, refuges, schools and centers of charity, which

everywhere radiated human mercy and goodwill; the lives of beneficence to which so many noble souls devoted themselves; the innumerable actions of benevolence, philanthropy and heroic self-sacrifice which light up these dark ages . . . These are all for the Son of Man," so writes Charles Loring Brace in his *Gesta Christi*.

When Jesus opened His mouth, men listened. They did not always hear that which they wanted to hear, but they were deeply affected by what they actually did hear. His words arrested attention from every class of men. They produced diverse effects according to the disposition and belief of the hearer. At one time "the people were astonished at His doctrine; for He taught them as one having authority." Upon another occasion the Jews were so incensed at Him when He finished speaking to them that they took up stones to cast at Him; "but Jesus hid himself." They were angered because He told them the truth about themselves. The Pharisees and chief priests were among those who became angry at His words, and they resolved to send officers to take Him and bring Him to them, but unfortunately for the success of the mission these officers stopped to listen while He taught, and, although there was a division among the people, some saying, "Of a truth this is the Prophet," and "This is the Christ," and others "Shall Christ come out of Galilee," these men went back to those who had sent them empty handed. Whereupon, when they were questioned as to why they had not brought Him, they added their verdict "Never man spake like this man." The

effect of His teachings on the popular mind was on the whole a pleasing one evidently, for we are told that "the common people heard Him gladly." It remained, however, for those who were closest to Him and who heard Him oftenest to reveal the profoundest effect. Speaking for the band of twelve, Peter, after listening to Him and companying with Him, cannot refrain from crying out "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."

The history of His own time finds its counterpart in modern times. Today we find men who take offense at His words, because they cut too deep into the life. They are not willing to accept His views as to marriage and divorce, as to forgiveness of those who have injured us, as to the duty of loving our enemies, as to non-resistance. These teachings are too hard for them; consequently they denounce them as effeminate and impractical and even showing a tendency to cowardice. Yet we do not lack those who take somewhat the same view as did the officers who came to arrest Him, and were won by His words. Listen, for instance, to the estimate of Rousseau: "What sweetness, what purity in the manner of Christ! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what fitness in his replies! How great his command over his passions! Where could he have learned, among his contemporaries, the pure and sublime morality which, in both precept and example, he has given us?" Strange words for an infidel to utter surely, yet an honest expression of the

impression Jesus made upon his mind. Theodore Parker speaks very much in the same vein: "This man, ridiculed for his lack of knowledge in a nation of hypocritical priests and corrupt people, falls back upon simple morality, upon simple religion; he unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realizing the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudice of his age, nation or sect; gives free range to the Spirit of God in his breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honored as it was, its forms, its sacrifice, its temple and its priests; puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, learned, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God." So, too, Benjamin Franklin bears witness that he thinks "Christ's system of morals and religion, as He left them with us, the best the world ever saw or is likely to see." The men, then, of His own day who appreciated Him and His teachings are not an isolated company, but find men in every age even to the twentieth century who agree with the verdict which they expressed. The impression which He makes upon the minds of men does not grow dim with the increasing years, but, just as a mountain range becomes clearer as we recede from it, so the lofty peaks of the ethical and religious teachings of this Carpenter stand out more vividly as the years separate us from Him.

What can be said with reference to the originality of His ideas and words? Some have said that He could not be classed as an original thinker, and have deduced as proof of the fact that a large number of His con-

ceptions are to be found in the Old Testament, the writings of the Rabbis, the Alexandrian philosophers, and even of Buddha and Zoroaster. Some have taken the trouble to print in parallel columns sentences from Jesus' lips and passages from these several sources, drawing the inference that the only possible explanation is that Jesus' borrowed or plagiarized. It may very readily be admitted that everything which He said was not absolutely novel, and we do not think that anyone will have the courage to make any such claim for Him. But we may ask, Is it necessary that every idea to which He gave expression should be unique and peculiarly His own that He might be called an original teacher? We think not. Originality does not consist simply in saying something which has never been said before. That is but one kind of originality. Shakespeare found the idea and the plot for a great many of his plays in old English literature and folk lore, but one would hardly say that Shakespeare was not original. He stamped his own personality and genius upon that which came to his hand, and when it passed from him it was his own creation. So Jesus used a great deal that other men had said, but He left the impress of His own spirit and mind upon it, He filled it with Himself, and so with Himself that when He spoke it, it was His. Mr. Wendling in his *Man of Galilee* makes the statement that "He is the only original thinker of whom the world has any record," and, "He reflects in His fundamental teachings and distinctive claims nothing of His own age, nor anything of any age that had gone before," having prefaced these remarks with a list of seven

points of originality which He finds in the teachings of the Galilean in addition to eight mentioned by Mark Hopkins, President of Williams College. These seven are as follows:

1. He was original in claiming to know all about God, and all about another world.

2. He was entirely original in giving to men a perfectly new conception of God.

3. He was original in proposing to set the world aright, not merely by His life and precepts, but largely by His death.

4. He was original in claiming to give to men an invisible and potent help in amending their lives.

5. He was original in His idea of a divine Society on earth—a kingdom of God here.

6. He was original in claiming and exercising the divine prerogative to forgive sin.

7. He was distinctly original in claiming for Himself the supreme power to legislate—in saying, “A new commandment I give unto you.”

It would seem from this array of evidence that Mr. Wendling had established the truth of his statement that “Jesus was the only original thinker of whom the world has any record.”

If it could be shown that a man who had “never learned,” who had never been trained in the wisdom

of the world, and who had never come into contact with the thoughts of the greatest thinkers up to his time, taught accurately and convincingly upon the deepest subjects and the most difficult problems with which the human mind wrestles, we would not be slow in heralding that man as a wonderful teacher, more remarkable than any who had ever appeared. Such is precisely the case with Jesus, and, as Canon Bernard has so well pointed out in his Bampton Lectures on *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*, His method of teaching "is seemingly to a great degree a method of chances and occasions; carried on by words suited to the moment, by separate addresses, or replies to particular persons, and by explanations added to particular acts. . . . It is from words dropped as it were in a private conversation by night, or in collision with the provocations of unbelievers, or amid sighs and sorrows by the grave of a friend, that we derive our plainest assurances of the mysteries of His salvation." While it is true that we have set discourses of His to His disciples, we do not have any recorded formal discourses upon specific themes. He does not argue the existence of God, the origin of evil, the problem of suffering, the mysteries of providence, divine sovereignty and free agency; but faith finds a resting place in His casual remarks bearing on these profound problems.

It is in private conversation with a sinful woman at noon by a well that He gives expression to that truth for which the world had been waiting so long that "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship

Him in spirit and in truth." The Fatherhood of God bursts from His lips when His disciples come to Him and ask Him to teach them how to pray, and He answers, "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven." Again it is in the attitude of prayer and in the words of supplication that He teaches us that God is more than Father, that He is also the Holy Father. God's character has been revealed to us without our perceiving that there is no more to be said. He has done it so casually and so simply that we did not realize it.

When He comes to speak of Man, He teaches us that man is dependent upon God as the child upon his father; that he is to worship God as Lord, and that he is to love Him with all his powers: that man is by nature evil, sin having the mastery over him. It is at mid-night that He reveals to a puzzled religious teacher that man's only hope is in being born again, not in sin this time, but in the spirit, thus throwing off that old sinful nature. In one of His conversations He throws a flood of light upon His estimate of the large possibilities which dwell within man even in his sinful nature, when He says, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts." In spite of the fact that He saw that corruption, He also saw the possibilities of good latent within. What further needs to be said about man? than that he is dependent upon God, that he must worship Him, that he is by nature sinful, that he must be regenerated, that there is hope for every man and possibilities for good in every breast?

His teaching concerning the Future is very explicit. He expressed no doubt whatever as to the reality of a future life. To His mind that was certain. The future life was endless, and was a life of joy or of misery according as man had prepared himself during this earthly life. There is a day of judgment which will decide the destiny of every man. The Son of Man is to be the judge who shall pronounce blessing or sentence. The character of the life upon earth will decide the character of the life after death, a good life here means a happy life then, a sinful life here means a life of misery then. No man has ever yet revealed one thing to us concerning the future life except Jesus, and the revelation which He has given us is sufficient. His teaching upon this mystery of the ages is entirely original and unique.

One of the great facts of life is Sin. The whole of the Old Testament is a record of the nature and results of sin, so much so that it has even been said that the keyword to the Old Testament is "Sin," and to the New Testament "Redemption." There were in the Hebrew eleven words used to denote sin or to describe it, and of these words Canon Girdlestone has said, "The pictorial power of the Hebrew language is seldom exhibited more clearly than in connection with various aspects of evil. Every word is a piece of philosophy; nay, it is a revelation." With reference to Jesus' contribution to this wealth of teaching concerning sin G. Campbell Morgan has said; "This then is the ultimate word of Christ about sin. It is a word that declares His victory over it, and His power to forgive it; and

that by the way of a cross that defies man's ability to explore it to its depths, or to speak the final word about its hidden mystery of pain. Thus our Lord teaches us the awfulness of sin, and reveals to us our solemn responsibilities in the presence of the evil force in the universe; but He stands in the midst of all the malady—material, mental and moral—and claims that by the mystery of His Cross, He is able to forgive sin; and to give to every man the new opportunity by way of moral reconstruction, which shall issue in the full realization of the good and perfect and acceptable will of God." Thus, while Jesus did not add anything to the conception of the appalling character of sin which the old Scriptures revealed, He did contribute something unique and valuable in regard to the method of forgiveness which God employed, that of the mystery of His Cross.

Alongside of these fundamental matters we find Him touching on such themes as the Scriptures and their authority, the Mosaic Laws and their spiritual interpretation, the Sabbath and the use to be made of it, the Holy Spirit and His work, the Devil and his power, Salvation and the outworkings of it, the Resurrection as the sign of victory over sin and death, the Kingdom of God which He came to establish, to consist of men and to be propagated by men until it shall eventually cover the earth.

We can recall no duty which He did not press home upon the consciences of men. Take a rapid survey of some of the duties which are required of men in the spiritual life—forgiveness of those who have injured

you, giving to God and the needy among men, service to those who stand in need of help, love to God and man including not only friends but enemies as well, faith, truth, sincerity, honesty, purity, temperance, self-control, humility, prayer, sacrifice, filial affection. Not one of them but what falls within the scope of His words.

The problem which is at present occupying the lion's share of the thinking of the religious world is the social one in its manifold ramifications. We might naturally ask then if Jesus has anything to say along this line, and the answer is a decidedly affirmative one. Of course, it must be borne in mind that every age and every nation has its own peculiar social conditions and problems to be met and solved, and no one man can solve each individual problem of every age and every land, because the conditions which faced Jesus do not face us, and the problems which clamor for solution today were unheard of in His day. However, He does enunciate principles which touch on all of our social questions, and which, if put into practice by men and society, would go a long way toward removing our difficulties. What are the social problems which are uppermost in the minds of men? They are the safeguarding of the home, marriage, divorce, child labor and exploitation, wealth, poverty, capital and labor, the place of woman, housing conditions and environments, duty to government. Upon every one of these subjects Jesus has some general, if not specific, but certainly some final, word to say. Recall such sentences as "Whom, therefore, God hath joined together let not

man put asunder," "whoso shall cause one of these little ones who believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea," "suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," "it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into heaven," "blessed are ye poor," "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" as well as "unto God the things that are God's." Recall these words snatched from His conversation and apply them to the problems mentioned above as principles upon which to proceed to a solution. Although He stood at the dawn of the first century the principles to which He gave expression have never been superseded during nineteen hundred years.

When we consider then the wide range of subjects which He touched upon, the profound problems upon which He has thrown light, the thorough understanding of human nature and of life which He evidences, the moral purity and sublime character of His words, the universal note which He strikes in all of His thinking and talking; the accuracy, certainty and authority of His teachings, we are not surprised that the "multitudes marvelled" at Him, and that the officers brought back word to those who had sent them that "Never man spake like this Man."

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”—*Matt. 16: 16.*

SO far in our observations we have found nothing at which Reason could object. Practically all men everywhere and in all time have agreed that Jesus lived the most beautiful life and maintained the noblest character the world has ever seen. All men are agreed that no other ethical or religious teacher can compare with Him. The mind of man experiences no difficulty on these points. So far, then, we are on solid ground. But, if we should meet with a person today who combined such excellency of character as to be absolutely free from sin, and acknowledged to be so by the large majority of men, whether believers or not, with such marvelous ability as a teacher that he is in a class all to himself, we should begin to suspect that there was something unusual about that person. We would wonder if he were a man like unto ourselves, and the conclusion to which we would come would very likely be that he was not. We no doubt would look around and see if there was any other man who possessed qualities like unto him or approaching to him. We would study history to ascertain if any man had ever lived upon this earth of whom it could be said that he did no sin, that he made no mistakes. And when we had finished our investigations and found that this was the only man of whom these statements could be made, we would have no hesitation in ascribing to him some such

title as the Super-Man, the Divine Man, or the God-Man. Now, we have seen in our discussions so far that Jesus of Nazareth was just such a person, although he lived nearly twenty centuries ago. If we proceed logically and arrive at a correct conclusion we must be willing to ascribe these titles to Him. And men have ascribed them to Him, but with a difference.

The object of this chapter is to show that we are well within the limits of rationality or reasonableness when we say that Jesus is divine, or with Peter "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the confession upon which the church is built. It is the creed of all ages. It is the belief of all Christian peoples today throughout the world. When the church ascribes any lower position to Him it will die a natural death. When Christian peoples deny to Him equality, or rather identity, with God they will cease to be worthy of the name of Christian. Unless Jesus is what He claims to be then He is nothing, and we must dismiss Him from serious consideration.

We said a moment ago that men have ascribed divinity to Him, but with a difference. Some say that He is more divine than others will admit that He is. Some accord Him a place nearer to God than others are willing to give Him. For instance, the Socinian and the Arian admit His uniqueness, that He is an extraordinary personality, and somewhat of a mystery, but they will not agree with the Evangelical in asserting that He is God incarnate. According to the Socinian Jesus is a man and nothing more. He is a good man, a saintly man; one who has attained a high degree of

perfection, higher possibly than has any other man. His wisdom is certainly unusual. His moral ideas are without doubt lofty and admirable. He has given to men an extraordinary example to follow and a highly elevated moral code to practice. He may be regarded as a prophet of God, one of the long line which could boast such names as Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Herdsman of Tekoa, John the Baptist. But beyond that conception of His person the Socinian cannot go. He admires Him, but He does not worship Him. He is willing to follow His teachings, but he is not willing to obey His commands. And consistently so, because He is no more than a created being. The Socinian denies to Him any unusual power such as that of working miracles. He denies to Him anything unusual as to His entrance into the world by birth from a Virgin, or His exit from the world by resurrection from the dead and ascension. He was born a natural birth, and died a natural death, and is now dead, having left only the record of a saintly life and a splendid set of principles.

One stage higher we come to the Arian view of Jesus. The Arian accepts all that the Socinian says about Jesus' character and life, but he goes quite a bit further and makes assertions as to His unique nature and personality. The Good Man and the Wonderful Teacher find ready acceptance with the Arian, but He is more than either of these; He is divine. He bears a special relation to God. "They recognize not only His spotlessness before men, but His sinlessness before His own conscience and God, rising to such a height that He

knows and proclaims Himself to be identical with man's relation to Himself." He is here with a special mission, a peculiar function to perform, and with more than human power with which to perform it. When He has done His work on earth, His unique position toward God gives Him the right to be the Judge of mankind, their Redeemer and also their King. But, although He occupies such a position, He is a creature of the hand of God nevertheless. He is not of the same nature as God, but is inferior. Dr. P. T. Forsyth says very tersely upon the Arian view of Jesus that "He is a King," but "a Satrap King still, with a Suzerain who conceivably could dethrone Him; a tributary King, who one day would render His royalty up. He was God's plenipotentiary, His superhuman chancellor, the most private secretary of His eternal praise, and so far invested with His power and prestige." Jesus is more highly exalted than in the Socinian view, but He is not yet the Deity.

Reason accepts these two estimates of Him. Can we go any further and not transgress rationality? We think so. Both of these views of Jesus might be placed together and classed as the lower view, but there is a higher view which differs vitally and fundamentally from them, and accords entirely with the demands of reason. That view has been stated already, viz., that Jesus is not only Good Man and Wonderful Teacher, but God manifest in the flesh, the only begotten Son of the Father. This view has been so well expressed by Dr. Forsyth that we shall take the liberty of again quoting from him somewhat at length. He says, "Its (the

New Testament) Christ does not come between us and God, either as prophet, teacher or saint. He brings God. God is in Him. He does not darken deity, or push deity away. Whatever may be said of the crimes of some later theologians in that way, it cannot be said that the total effect of either the New Testament or its Christ has been to banish God from humanity. Quite the other way. . . . God is brought near both theologically and experimentally. And He has been brought near to all. Christ did not enable certain promising classes of men, by escaping from their first gross and hylic condition, to rise to the supreme God and His far country. But this high God was in Christ, not creating Christ, not emitting Christ at some removes, but present in Him, acting and suffering in Him, reconciling the world, making men sons only in this His Son, and giving them an intimacy of communion as far from their old alienation at the one end, as far from mere fusion of being at the other." It is this view of Jesus which we believe to be the true one, and which we feel satisfied can be proved to be correct.

To any one who accepts the New Testament record as accurate and a true account of actual facts, there will be little difficulty, if any, in accepting this higher view of the person of Jesus. The purpose of that record is to convince men of the fact that this Jesus, the reputed son of Joseph and Mary, is the Son of God, and if the Son then equal with God. It is the history and the interpretation of a supernatural life. Attempts have been made to take away the supernatural from the record of the life portrayed, but in doing so there has

been left nothing but thin shreds of what was once a beautiful masterpiece. The supernatural and Jesus are inseparably linked together.

Notice, for instance, the claims which He made for Himself involving supernatural powers and a being essentially the same as God's. He claimed to be the Light of the world with power to dispel the darkness of sin and illumine man's pathway to the city which hath foundations. He claimed to be the Way by which man finds his way to the Father, and says plainly that "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." He claimed to be the Truth. Other teachers have ever been in search of the truth; He claims to be the object of their search. He claims to be the Life, the creator of life, the inspiration of life, the object and end of life. He claimed to possess power to forgive sins, and His countrymen understood the significance of that claim when they asked the question, "Who can forgive sins save God only." He claimed the power to rise from the dead and to be the Resurrection, the One in whom all men should rise. He claimed to have existed before the patriarch Abraham and to have come down from heaven. He claimed superiority to the wise king Solomon. He claimed to be above the most binding of the Jewish laws and institutions, saying that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. He claimed to be the revelation of the Father, and asserted that any one who had seen Him had seen the Father. He claimed that His words were more enduring than heaven and earth, and that because they were spirit and life. He claimed all power in heaven above and earth beneath and to be

able to give such power to the church which He should found that the forces of hell should not be able to prevail against it.

Now, it is one thing to make great claims for one's self, and quite another thing to be able to substantiate those claims. Many men have arrogated to themselves fabulous powers, but when the test came they were weighed in the balance and found wanting. Was that the case with Jesus? Or did He vindicate the claims which He made? The verdict of history is very clear. Has any man ever yet been able to point out successfully one single claim which Jesus made and which He could not and did not substantiate? When He was challenged in His own day with being unable to prove His claims He very quickly silenced His challengers. It is the same today. The vox populi stands solidly at His back, so that men simply acknowledge the mystery though they be unable to explain it.

The works which He did are an unanswerable testimony to His deity to those who accept the New Testament as an accurate record. Because false prophets have attempted to back their claims by the performance of wonders, we sometimes think that the appeal to the miracles which Jesus wrought as credentials were best left unmentioned. But we find that He makes the appeal Himself, and we follow after. He held up His works before men and told them if they would not believe on Him for any other reason, to believe "for the very works sake." When mere man does the works which He did then those works will cease to be evi-

dence of the supernatural, but until then they stand as unanswerable arguments and evidence of the fact.

The greatness of any man can be determined in large measure by the appeal which he makes to his fellow men, and the effect which he has upon them. Men do not notice the little man. He produces no more effect upon their minds than the strange faces which they meet upon the crowded street. But it is a certain evidence of a man's greatness when he stirs up in the souls of men some deep and strong emotion. A great man has the most loyal friends and also the very bitterest enemies. No one bears an attitude of indifference toward him. Judged by this criterion, and accepting the New Testament as true history, Jesus stands high amongst the world's great ones, and if we follow along the same line down through the pages of history, He rises ever higher and higher until He stands upon a level with God. In the beginning of His ministry at His simple bidding men leave their homes, their fathers and mothers, their business, their means of livelihood, and follow Him with promises of not even bread to eat and a place to sleep. In His presence men feel themselves to be unclean and sinful. He talks to a woman by a well, and she soon comes to the conclusion that He is a prophet. Those who bear the deepest stains of sin and long to live a better life come and cast themselves at His feet. The common people, or rather the masses, hang upon His words when He speaks, and are anxious to make Him their king. The men who have followed after Him and been with Him constantly recognize Him as the "Christ, the Son of the living

God," and after His departure are willing to lay down their lives for the cause which He came to establish. He was the object of the bitterest hatred to the scribes and Pharisees, the hypocritical leaders of the religion of the people. Whenever and wherever He touched a man or a woman, from that moment He was a person who had to be reckoned with. Even in His death, without even speaking a word or doing any deed that related to the centurion who was in charge of His execution, this hardened Roman soldier became convinced that "this man was truly the Son of God." Add to these testimonies that of others who came into touch with Him. The estimate which the man so popularly called the Doubter, Thomas, placed upon Him was, "My Lord and My God." What does Nicodemus say about Him? "Thou art a Teacher come from God." How did He affect the man before whom He was tried for His life? What does Pilate say of Him? "I find no fault in Him." We come down the centuries until eighteen have passed, and we listen as the great Corsican upon his lonely isle of exile speaks: "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. Everything in Him astonishes me. Between Him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by Himself. His birth and the history of His life, the profound character of His teachings, which grapple the mightiest difficulties with the most admirable solution, His Gospel, His empire, His march across the

ages, everything is for me a prodigy which plunges me into reveries which I cannot escape. Here I see nothing human. For three hundred years spirit struggled against the brutality of sense, conscience against despotism, the soul against the body, virtue against all the vices. The blood of Christians flowed in torrents. They died kissing the hand that slew them. Everywhere Christians fell, and everywhere they triumphed. You speak of Caesar, of Alexander, of their conquest and of the enthusiasm which they enkindled in their soldiers. These, with Charlemagne and myself, founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His upon love; and to this day millions would die for Him. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over the whole earth!" Such an effect did Jesus produce upon one of the strongest wills and the most brilliant geniuses of history. Lord Byron seems to have shared the experience of Bonaparte; "If ever man was God, or God man, Jesus Christ was both." Even the schools of Rationalism give evidence of being impressed by Jesus as they have been impressed by no other man. The brilliant Frenchman, Ernest Renan, speaks of Jesus, if not in terms of deity, as Christians understand that term, then certainly in the sense in which he himself understands it, when he says, "All history is incomprehensible without Him. He created the object and fixed the starting place of the future faith of humanity. He is the incomparable man to whom the universal conscience has

decreed the title of Son of God, and that with justice. In the first rank of this grand family of the true sons of God we must place Jesus. The highest consciousness of God which ever existed in the breast of humanity was that of Jesus. Repose now in thy glory, noble Founder! Thy work is finished, thy divinity established. Thou shalt become the cornerstone of humanity so entirely that to tear thy name from this world would rend it to its foundations. Between thee and God there will no longer be any distinction. Complete Conqueror of death, take possession of thy kingdom, whither shall follow thee by the royal road which thou hast traced, ages of adoring worshippers. Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; His legend will call forth tears without end; His sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; and all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus. Even Paul is not Jesus. How far removed are we all from thee, dear Master! Where is thy mildness, thy poetry? Thou to whom a flower didst bring pleasure and ecstasy, dost thou recognize as thy disciples these wranglers, these men furious over their prerogatives, and desiring that everything should be given to them? They are men; Thou art a God."

When in all the history of the world has any man produced such an impression on the minds and souls of men as has Jesus? We have read but a few testimonies from men of recognized ability. These could be repeated a million-fold by men and women who

have found Him to be all in all to them. If the impression which a man makes upon men is any criterion of greatness, then both the force and the character of the impression which Jesus has made upon humanity declare Him to be, within all reason, no less than God.

So far we have been proceeding upon the assumption that the New Testament is a true and accurate history, that from its statement there is no appeal. But, if we would present the case in its strongest aspect, we cannot proceed upon any assumption whatever. Some one will say, But all men are not willing to admit that the New Testament record is true; the critics have proven that some portions of it may be of doubtful origin. It may be that Jesus did not say some of the things which are credited to Him, or do some of the mighty works which He is said to have wrought. What then? Have we no other proof that He is the worthy object of our worship and adoration. We believe that, leaving aside His miraculous birth, His miracles, His resurrection, all things supernatural which are recorded of Him, we still have sufficient evidence to satisfy the demands of reason that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The New Testament is now closed. We lay it aside, and return no more to it for fear some one will say that we are putting in a little of its leaven. So then we make no return to it whatever.

It is a scientific fact that every object which we see about us has been created and made and fashioned into the form in which we see it. It has not just appeared of itself. There has been some producing cause. When

we look out of our window and see the giant oak we know that that oak has not just come to be of its own accord. There has been some producing cause. When we go to the seashore and observe the rise and fall of the tide, we do not imagine that the tide simply rises and falls of its own accord. There is some producing cause. When we awake in the morning and see the sun rising in the east, and several hours later behold the beauties of the setting sun now in the west, who of us does not know that a great law of the universe has been in operation and that the earth has been moving about the sun in obedience to that law? In other words, and to speak in scientific terms, every effect has an adequate cause. Now, let us apply this law to some facts which we find in the realm of religion, concerned with Jesus Christ.

However much men may differ as to views and interpretations of passages and doctrines contained in it, all men have to admit that the New Testament does exist. Large parts have been excised and eliminated by critical scholars and unscholarly critics, but, in spite of the large portions that have been torn away for reasons sufficient to those who performed the operations if to no one else, the New Testament remains today for the rank and file of the Christian world practically intact. Admitting the existence of this book, or collection of books, the most reasonable and scientific view to take is that there has been some cause sufficient to produce it. Whence is it? Who wrote it? To whom is the world indebted for the transcendent character which it portrays and the sublime truths which it

teaches? The author ought to be known and in justice given the credit which is due? How, then, did this work come into existence? Some would have us believe that it is but the creation of some dreamer or group of dreamers of the early centuries of the Christian era. They deny that any man ever lived such as is described in these pages. Jesus never lived, or, if he did live, he was no more than a man around whom some fanatical disciples have wound myths and fables. They tell us that the followers of other founders of religions have done the same thing. The life of Buddha and Mohammed are enveloped in mystery and myth. Extraordinary powers are attributed to them also. And this is true, but it does not account for the whole of the New Testament. Not only is the "hero" of this work accredited with marvelous powers, but with a character impossible of invention. It is simply ridiculous to attempt to prove that the fishermen who became the disciples of Jesus, or that any men who lived in the early Christian centuries, invented this character. As some one has said, "It would take a man greater than Jesus to invent the character of Jesus." He must have lived the life and done the works which are attributed to Him. He Himself must be the producing cause of the existence of this Book. Jesus does not depend upon the New Testament, but the New Testament depends upon Jesus. He is back of it, and without Him it could not exist. If that be true, and it must be true, then Jesus must be what the New Testament says that He is, "The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Another indisputable fact is that there is a powerful movement in the world tending to the establishment of a spiritual kingdom, and that this movement is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. During the early years of the Christian era this movement was limited to the lands lying around the Mediterranean Sea, the countries of Western Asia and Southern Europe. Being inspired with a burning zeal for the spread of the faith which they avowed, the adherents of this movement went forward into places before unexplored, carrying with them the message which Jesus had given them. Others were constantly being won to this new faith in different countries until, after only a few centuries, the movement could boast of followers by the thousands and millions. Time rolls on, and we find this kingdom continually progressing establishing bases of work in Northern Europe and the islands of the Atlantic. Time continues to pass, and the new faith has spread to America, going ever forward and never backward. Today there is no nation upon earth, and hardly an island of the sea where there are not to be found followers of the man Jesus. The kingdom has spread until it has covered the whole earth, and the subjects of the kingdom are so loyal to their King that as Napoleon said "millions are ready to die for Him." Thus, beginning with a few unlearned men in the first century this movement is now world-wide, and the most potent force for the uplift of men in existence. There must be some adequate cause to account for it. What is it?

As we pause for an answer we hear some one say that this movement which we call Christianity is not the only one which has spread from a small beginning, and now numbers its devotees by the millions. They point us to Buddhism and Mohammedanism, and tell us that these religions rival the Christian in numbers and zeal, and that if we argue that God is behind Christianity, by the same arguments we must hold that He is behind these others. We must then either surrender our contention or else make God the inspirer of movements which drag men down, body and soul, into the depths of hell. But, if we examine into the causes of the spread of Buddhism and Mohammedanism on the one hand and Christianity on the other, we shall find that they are vastly different. And it is in this difference that we find the solid ground upon which to base our argument. That difference is this. In Mohammedanism and Buddhism we find nothing which demands the surrender of anything which the natural man, or man just as he is without the spirit of God in his heart, objects to giving up. These religions require the doing of those things which man likes to do. It would not be hard to build up a church of children if the only condition of membership in that church was that each child must have as much chocolate candy as he wanted. Likewise it is not hard to win followers to a movement which appeals to the appetites of men. We do not have to look any farther to find a cause sufficient to account for the growth of these movements. But with Christianity we find the very opposite to be true. The King requires of men that they give up a

great many of the things that they love. He makes no appeal to the appetite of man, but He makes stern demands upon them which call for sacrifice and suffering. He holds out before them the prospects of a hard life. He tells them that men will revile them and persecute them and say all manner of evil against them, and even go so far as to deliver them up to magistrates and take their lives by violence. And yet, in spite of such prospects, His kingdom is winning its way in the world. Can we find any adequate cause for its continual growth in the demands which it makes upon men? Reason tells us that we cannot. We must therefore find it somewhere else. There must be a powerful personality behind the movement. Those who are the most loyal and zealous adherents of this kingdom are united in saying that their King, even Jesus, is the cause. What right has anyone who is not so well acquainted with the kingdom to say that their testimony is not true? Dr. Howard Agnew Johnston says we take the testimony of experts in medicine, law and all other branches of science because we believe they know most about their lines of work. It is only scientific for us to take the word of experts in religion also.

In his sermon on the Deity of Jesus in his volume *Things Fundamental*, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson of New York, points out that the church which has held to the higher conception of the person of Jesus has always been the progressive church, and the church holding to the lower conception presents to us a dead church. He says: "The Congregationalists who remained true to the higher conception of Jesus have become an army

of 650,000, those who accepted the lower conception of Jesus are today a small company of 70,000. The Congregational churches which remained true to the teaching of the church have in foreign lands today hundreds of men and women teaching the gospel of the blessed God, while the Unitarian churches of this country have not one single missionary in pagan lands." This is but one illustration. History abounds in others. There is no life, no spirit, no inspiration in the lower conception, and that because there is no hope in it. To quote Dr. Jefferson again: "There is something pathetic in the disappointment of the men who in spite of history keep on clinging to the lower conception. William Ellery Channing, after forty years of as earnest work as any Christian preacher ever did, said in his old age, 'I would that I could look to Unitarianism with more hope.'" Does this fact not speak to us in no uncertain tones, telling us that Jesus honors those who honor Him, and brings to nought the work of those who dishonor Him? If He be able to so honor and dishonor can He be other than God?

Another fact which cannot be denied is that there is a wonderful transforming power in the religion which has its center in Jesus Christ. As we observe history we see Jesus walking down the centuries a conqueror, overthrowing long established customs of nations, dissipating the darkness of superstition and evil, abolishing slavery and other institutions of evil by His silent power, raising woman from a low to a lofty place in the esteem of the world, making men more humane and lovable. Such results as these cannot be accom-

plished by mere principles and ethical standards, by ideals, culture and civilization. There is of necessity some personal force behind these principles. If Jesus be not deity, strange it is that these results are accomplished by His religion and not by others. Jesus is in the world today working His miracles, turning the social customs of peoples upside down, and overthrowing mighty empires.

There is but one word more to add before bringing this chapter to a close, and that is a personal one. Jesus Christ is accepted as God only by the man whose heart is right toward God. Only the pure in heart shall see God, and see Him revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. The most powerful and convincing arguments are wholly inadequate to make any man a believer in Jesus when his heart is not right. A sinful heart blinds the eyes and stupefies the will. Proofs and arguments avail only when we are on our knees. And the more truly we worship Him the more truly does He become our friend. In owning His deity let us not make the mistake of forgetting that He is our Brother, very near to us, the great Comrade of each child of the Father. His deity does not remove Him from those whom He came to live with and die for.

THE INCARNATION

“Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.”—*Phil. 2: 6-8.*

THERE are two views which a man is at liberty to take with respect to the question of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The one view has been set forth very clearly by Principal Fairbairn in his *Philosophy of the Christian Religion* as follows: “The doctrine that affirms that Jesus was ‘God manifest in the flesh’ or, in other words, that in Christ the natures of God and man were so united as to form a single and indivisible person, is the very apotheosis of the inconceivable. God is a being too transcendental to be either known or rationally conceived; but man is a child of nature and experience; how, then, can we attach any idea to the words which affirm a union of these two?—of the God who transcends our experience, and of the Man who is its most familiar factor and object? But suppose it be granted that both ideas are alike real, is it any more possible to conceive them as so united as to constitute an historical person? The incarnation of God in all men, the manifestation of the Creator in the whole race He had created, might be an arguable position; but not its rigorous and exclusive individuation, or restriction to a single person out of all the infinite multitude of millions who have lived, are living, or are to live. God and man are too incompatible in their attributes to be conceived as co-ordinated in a

Being who appears on the stage of history as a human individual, and who has the experiences and suffers the fate proper to one. The man cannot become God, for man is mortal and finite, God eternal and infinite; and it does not lie even with the Almighty to invest temporal being with the attributes of the eternal. Nor can God become a man more than His eternity can be annihilated or His infinitude cancelled or curtailed. To attempt to conceive God creating another God, or ceasing to be the God He is, were to attempt a feat which is impossible to reason. Then if the union is effected by God remaining God, and the man a man, what sort of being is the resultant person? Nay, is he, in any tolerable sense, a person at all? Is he not rather a mere symbol of contradictory ideas, as it were qualities which thought refuses to relate, and is therefore unable to unite, personalized and made into an everlasting enigma?" Thus does Fairbairn state the position which he proposes to refute.

The other view we find in the prologue to John's Gospel; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth." Then the evangelist goes on to specify more definitely who this Word is. He is the One to whom John the Baptist beareth witness, saying, "This was He of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me; for He was before me. For of His fulness have we all received,

and grace for grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." So, then, the "word which was in the beginning, which was with God, and which was God" is the same One through whom came grace and truth, even Jesus Christ. It is upon this view that the church is built, to which it has always held, and to which it will ever hold as long as it cares to maintain its power in the world.

Now the question with which we are especially concerned is as to which of these two views is the reasonable one, for both of them cannot satisfy the demands of the reason equally. Is it more reasonable to accept the view which Fairbairn outlines as being the view of the intellect simply, or to accept that which the Apostle John sets forth as being the true one? The purpose of the present chapter is to show that John's view is a more reasonable one, involving fewer difficulties than that of the intellectualist.

In legal cases when a man is charged with committing a crime, the prosecuting attorney always endeavors to ascertain if there exists a motive sufficient to cause the defendant to commit such a crime. If such a motive can be found, the prosecution has a strong link in its chain of evidence. For instance, a man is charged with the murder of his employer. In the investigation which follows it is learned that the murdered man had \$10,000 in cash upon his person at the time of the murder. It is also learned that the man charged with committing the crime knew that the murdered man had that money upon him. A very reasonable motive has been found for the committal of the murder, namely

the acquiring of a small fortune. If that is considered reasonable in law, it should also be considered reasonable in the matter in hand. We come, then, to the question, Did God have any motive sufficiently powerful to prompt Him to become incarnate, thus limiting Himself to the dimensions of a man? And the answer to that question is to be found in the express declarations of the purpose for which Jesus Christ came into the world. What was that purpose, or rather should we ask, what were those purposes?

In I John 3:5 we read, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away sin." Now sin is the great disturbing element in the world. It has wrecked the harmony of nature. It has produced moral chaos where there was once order. It has done more to undo the works of God than any other thing. It has destroyed men both body and soul, men made in the image of God. It is rebellion against the government and holiness of God. It exerts its damning influence upon everything with which it comes in contact. The devil is the great destroyer, and sin is the instrument which he employs to accomplish his work. Now, one of the purposes for which God manifested Himself was to remove this power of ruin and destruction from the fair work of His hands. Is any sacrifice too great, is any process too condescending, if by that sacrifice and by that process of condescension this horrible thing which we call sin can be removed? Have we not here a sufficient motive for the incarnation?

Again we read in I Timothy 1:15 that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." These sinners

are human beings with immortal souls. They are the masterpieces of God's handiwork. God spent five days in making preparation for the entrance into the world of this crown of His creation. "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" So Shakespeare apostrophises. Sin is the great disease, the great peril to which men are exposed, and which is blighting them, so that they take on not only its pollution but also its name. Is it unreasonable to suppose that God would condescend to become man in order that He might thereby save man, His creative masterpiece and the object of His love? No more so than that a father should count no sacrifice too great, even to the giving of his life, in order to save his son.

Another one of the purposes of the incarnation is expressed in the Gospel of John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him," and Jesus Himself expresses the accomplishment of that purpose when He says, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." So, then, God became incarnate that He might be manifested to man, or revealed to man. The great need of man as a sinner is to behold the face of the Father, and, seeing Him, to become like Him. God is the cure of all man's ills. His vision cannot penetrate the heavens, and, besides, no man can see God and live. If he is to see and know God and become like Him, it must be done by God making a revelation

of Himself in some form which man can gaze upon and understand and follow. The purpose for which Jesus came was that that revelation might be made through Him. Man being what he is, and occupying the place in the heart of God that he does, and his supreme need being to see and know God in order to his salvation, can it be said that there is not constituted here a sufficient motive for the Incarnation? It would be unreasonable to suppose that God would withhold that revelation of Himself.

Once more we go to John to learn the purpose of the incarnation. In the 10th chapter and 10th verse of his Gospel, we read the words which Jesus applied to Himself, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Surely it is not all of life to live. Some have life, others have life more abundantly. God is too deeply interested in His creature to be content to have him existing amidst the ruins of sin, dragging out a wretched existence. He covets for him something better and nobler. And His desire is put into operation. He comes to show man how he may have a fuller and a richer life. He lives that life before him. He instructs him in the principles of it. By His grace and by His power He makes it possible for man to throw off the old narrow, cramped existence.

We have therefore stated a four-fold purpose or motive for the Incarnation, any one of which is reasonably sufficient to account for the limitation which God would have to place upon Himself in order to become flesh. When we come face to face with four motives any one of which is sufficient, the case becomes just

four times as strong. Applying, then, a standard which is recognized as valid in law and is practised every day in the courts of the land, the Incarnation comes to us as an exceedingly rational process.

There is an objection stated in the quotation from Principal Fairbairn which at first sight appears a very real one, but which disappears very quickly upon maturer thought. The objection may be stated briefly in this form; that "God is too transcendental" and "man is too much a child of nature and experience" for it to be possible that they should be "conceived as coordinated in a Being who appears on the stage of history as a human individual, and who has the experiences and suffers the fate proper to one." Man cannot become God because he is finite, a creature of a day and God is infinite and eternal. Neither can God become man because the finite cannot also be infinite. It is a contradiction in terms. The answer to this objection is found in the words of the same scholar in his *Place of Christ in Modern Theology*: "There is, in truth, no difficulty involved in His union with human nature that is not equally involved in His relation to material nature, which, however vast, is not so near the Infinite as man, and, however old, has not so much of eternity within it as his mind. The relation must indeed assume different forms, because the terms related are different. There can be no personal union with material nature, for it knows no personality; but with human nature, which must be personal to be, the union which does not become personal is not absolutely real. While then, the Incarnation does no more violence to the physical

attributes of God than creation does, it yet so exalts and glorifies His moral qualities and character that in its presence the voices of nature may be said to lose their music or die into silence." We need make no comment upon Dr. Fairbairn's remarks.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

One of the most "spoken against" elements of the Incarnation is the manner in which it was accomplished, viz., the Virgin Birth. From the earliest times until the present day, men have caviled at it. One of the first points of the Christian Faith at which the critic trains his guns is this article, "born of the Virgin Mary," because he thinks it is the most vulnerable point. The question has even been asked, What can be said in favor of it? We are prepared to admit that were a virgin birth claimed under any other circumstances and in connection with the mode of entrance into this world of any other person, grave doubts would arise in our minds as to the probability of such a thing. So, then, to the man who denies that there is anything unusual about Jesus Christ, and who refuses to accept the Scriptures as a true and accurate record, we have nothing to say. But to the man who does believe that the Scriptures are documents written by inspiration of God, and who believes further that Jesus Christ is more than mere man, yet who experiences difficulties in accepting this article of the Christian faith on account of its uniqueness in the history of mankind or for other reasons, we have somewhat to say, and the gist of our remarks is this, that it is more reasonable to

accept the Virgin Birth as an article of faith in the light of the evidence at hand than it is to reject it.

The objections usually raised to the Virgin Birth of Jesus are; First, that the only basis we have for belief in it are the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke; second, that it makes too great a demand upon our credulity; third, that there is no necessity for it; and fourth, that the scholarship of the world is all against it. In order to clear the ground it will be well to take up these objections first.

The first of these objections reveals a low conception of the authority of the Scriptures. It is true that the work of Biblical Criticism has done a great deal to bring us nearer to the original documents by exposing interpolations and correcting mistranslations. Instead of denouncing all the critics as a set of blasphemers and unbelievers, as many do, we acknowledge the aid which they have given to the proper understanding of the Word of God. However, we are not therefore obliged to accept every statement which they make with reference to every particular passage, for it happens that a great many statements are made for which no reasons are given and which have no other basis than the opinion of the writer. Now, the objection under consideration takes this form. The Virgin Birth rests entirely for support upon the introductory chapters to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke; critics of the highest rank have said that these chapters are neither authentic nor accurate; therefore, the belief of the church in the Virgin Birth has no foundation, and consequently must be rejected from a rational faith. In order to off-set

this objection it will only be necessary to show that the two accounts are both authentic and accurate, which will be an easy task. The question of accuracy involves the larger question of the truth of the whole of Scripture, which lies outside of the scope of this chapter. We proceed upon the assumption that what is proved to be genuine and authentic is true and accurate. What evidence, then, can be produced that the two portions of the New Testament are genuine parts of the Word of God? The test of genuineness of Scripture passages is their appearance in the most authoritative Manuscripts and Versions. When we apply this test to the passages under discussion what do we find to be the case? Simply this, that the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke are found in every unmutated Manuscript which has been discovered, and are not omitted from a single one of the early Versions of Scripture. Taking the great Uncial Manuscript we find the birth narratives in the Sinaitic Manuscript, the Alexandrian Manuscript, which in Matthew is mutilated, but intact in Luke; the Vatican Manuscript, the Codex Bezae, the Codex Ephraemi, and all other uncials and cursives. No matter how far back we go and how near we come to the original documents of Matthew and Luke we find these narratives in every single Manuscript. When we examine the Versions, the translations, we find that the most important ones, the Latin, including the Vulgate and Old Latin; the Syriac, including the Peshitta and the Curetonian; and the Egyptian or Coptic, without exception contain these narratives as we have them in the more modern King

James and Revised Versions. If we go one step farther we find quotations from them in the writings of the early church fathers of the second century. If these chapters were not in the original writings of Matthew and Luke, then how can this unanimity of appearance in Manuscript and Versions of the earliest dates as well as the latest be explained? Time was not sufficient for the churches in the parts of the world represented by the Manuscript and Versions to enter into collusions to deceive the world, to say nothing of the impossibility of such a deception. It is, therefore, only reasonable to conclude that the accounts of the Virgin Birth of our Lord are genuine parts of the two Gospels in which they occur.

The second objection mentioned above is that the story makes too great a demand upon our credulity. It has never happened before nor since in the history of the world. It is a violation of the order of nature. In other words, it is just simply asking the reason to accept an impossibility. This objection is really an objection against miracles as a whole, and is in line with the tendency which rules miracles out along with all the supernatural. Of course, if it can be proved conclusively that the supernatural has no place in the governing of the world, and that all parts of the Bible which imply the supernatural must fall and be considered rubbish, then there must be an end to all discussion of the subject, for the claim which the church makes is that her Lord was not born in the natural way but in a manner which transcends the natural. We must therefore postpone the answer to this objection until

we come to the discussion of the subject of Miracles in next chapter.

The third objection usually raised to the Virgin Birth is that there is no necessity for it to have taken place as the Bible says that it did take place, and that it is an unnecessary article of the Christian faith. In support of this objection the silence of other parts of Scripture are cited. For instance, neither of the other two Evangelists mention it, Mark or John: Paul is said to make no reference to it in his preaching or in his letters to the churches and others; neither is any use made of it in the preaching of the other Apostles or in their letters. If it had been a necessary article of faith, we would find it as prominent in the preaching and epistles of the Apostles as is the death of Christ. So far as the silence of Mark and John is concerned it is simply necessary to bear in mind the fact that the earthly origin of the Master did not come within the scope of their purpose. Mark begins his Gospel with the opening of the public ministry of Jesus, omitting the first thirty years of His life entirely. Arguing by the silence of Mark if we are logical we must conclude that He was a man full grown when He appeared on earth. Likewise is it without the scope of John's purpose to mention the manner of His entrance into the world. John's Gospel was written years after the other three; he was acquainted with the contents of the earlier Gospels, and consequently, instead of repeating what they had written, he traces the genealogy or rather the origin of his Lord back beyond human ancestry to His life with God before the world was. Had John

believed that the stories of the Virgin Birth as contained in Matthew and Luke were false, he could not have allowed them to pass without correcting them. As to the silence of Paul and the other Apostles, it may readily be admitted that they do not make definite affirmation of the fact of the Virgin Birth, neither do they preach it; but that is a long way from saying that they did not know about it, and that it was not considered necessary by them. The theme of their preaching was Redemption and that by the Cross. Their epistles are written for a definite purpose to serve a practical and immediate end; they are not intended to be theological treatises. If the question had been raised by the Christians or unbelievers of their day, they would have spoken to it as they did to other matters. Their silence seems to point more to the fact that there was no question raised, the belief being universal, than that the Apostles did not know about it.

As to the necessity of Christ's entrance into the world by birth from a virgin we make just two remarks. The first is that when a sinless and perfect being comes into the world by natural generation it will be time to begin to doubt the necessity of God's employing some supernatural means of entrance into the world. Until then it is only rational to expect Him to employ some such means. The other remark is that made by Dr. James Orr, "We are poor judges of what may or may not be involved in so transcendent a fact as the Incarnation; and if, according to the evidence we have, this was actually the way in which God brought His Son into the world, it would be wiser for us to assume that there

is a doctrinal connection, whether we can see it or not, than hastily to conclude that the Virgin Birth is of indifference to faith.”

The final objection requires but a brief review of the scholarship on both sides of the question to determine which side can boast the preponderance. Upon the side of those who deny the fact stand such names as Beyschlag, Keim, Schmiedel, Pfeiderer, Lobstein, Usener, Soltau, Harnack, Bousset, Gunkel, O. Holtzmann, Gardner, Conybeare, Foster, Schmidt. Truly a great array of names, and representing some of the most profound scholarship of the world. However, when we turn to view the names which can be placed among those who accept the fact as Matthew and Luke declare it, we come upon such as Lange, Tholuck, Luthardt, F. Delitzsch, Rothe, Dorner, Martensen, Oosterzee, Godet, Lightfoot, Westcott. Fairbairn, Sanday, Swete, Sir William Ramsay, Bishop Gore, Canon Ottley, Knowling, Canon Henson, Adeney, Garvie, James Denney, Zahn, B. Weiss, Seeberg, Cremer, Kahler, Orr, Philip Schaff, Briggs, Addis, Doumergue, Moule, Bruce, Dods, Cowan, and others. Upon which side does the preponderance of the world's finest scholarship lie?

Having said so much in removing the objections which are commonly raised to the Virgin Birth of our Lord, the remainder of this chapter will be occupied with thoughts of a more positive character, in which an effort will be made to show the reasonableness of the fact as we have it stated in Matthew and Luke.

*The majority of these names are taken from Dr. Jas. Orr's *The Virgin Birth of Christ*.

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians he speaks of the first Adam and the Second Adam, the one the head of a natural race, being merely "a living soul," the other the head of a spiritual race, being "a life giving spirit." Regarding the origin of man, the majority of mankind believe that God created him, although opinions differ as to the method used. If the reason finds no difficulty in accepting the fact that God exercised His creative power in order to form the head of a natural or physical race of men, is it unreasonable to assert that He exerted a power above the natural in order to form the head of a spiritual race of men? Let it be once admitted that He formed one man supernaturally for good and sufficient reasons, there can be no objection to His doing the same thing another time when there arises a sufficient motive.

The denial or acceptance of the Virgin Birth goes hand in hand with the denial or acceptance of the miraculous life of our Lord. If the arguments set forth in last chapter to prove the deity of Jesus be sound, and if therefore Jesus be God, His whole life is miraculous. We cannot pull the life of Christ apart, taking what we wish and leaving what we do not care for. It must be taken as a whole or rejected as a whole. Looking at it from that point of view the miraculous beginning of the life would be expected. It cannot be denied that this Man was a historic personage, that He actually lived. We have seen His deity established by many "infallible proofs." The question presses itself as to which is the more incredible and irrational, to

hold that He appeared upon earth full grown as Minerva was said to have sprung full grown from the head of Jupiter, or that He was born a babe and grew with the passing years into manhood? Surely the latter is the more reasonable.

Now the question arises as to which makes the greater demand upon reason in the light of His life which we have seen manifests deity, a natural birth or birth from a virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost? No man has ever yet lived such a life and maintained such a character. He is absolutely unique in the history of the race. Natural birth has never produced such a personage. He cannot be explained upon natural grounds. And yet He was here and did live this life. That is a fact established beyond dispute. Now what explanation does the rationalist attempt? His method is well known. What cannot be explained upon a basis which is entirely natural is simply denied, no matter what proof of the fact exists. What explanation can be given of it in accord with the facts? None other than that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." There is no other explanation of the virgin life of Jesus so rational as the virgin birth, and the two go hand in hand.

There is one other fact in relation to Jesus which calls for explanation and which can be explained most reasonably upon the theory of the Virgin Birth. Not only did He have the power to live a holy and sinless and full life Himself, but He had the power to enable others to do the same. His power to forgive sins and enable the sinner to "go and sin no more" was just as

real as His power to heal the sick and hold the multitudes spell bound as He preached to them. Undoubtedly He possessed that power during His earthly life. Since He returned to the Father from whom He came forth He has been exercising that power. We have seen the effects of it with our own eyes. We have seen men lifted by that unseen power from lives of sin and shame, and enabled to live lives of righteousness and honor and usefulness. No one acquainted with the life of the men out in the world, and who has used his eyes and his brain can doubt that fact. The only question is, Where did He obtain that power, whence came it? It was not natural. Joseph and Mary did not possess it, and could not have transmitted it to Him. No man born of earthly parents has ever possessed it. There must be some explanation of it. That explanation is found in the fact that Jesus was not the son of Joseph and Mary as He was reputed to be, but that He was the Son of God, and received His power to transform lives and hearts from His Father. He was the son of Mary, but not of Joseph. His presence in and birth from the womb of Mary is accounted for by the fact that what the angel announced really came to pass, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." It was by reason of this fact that "the holy thing which was begotten" was "called the Son of God."

Having, therefore, found sufficient grounds upon which the objections to the Virgin Birth of our Lord can be swept aside, and having mentioned some facts which can be explained upon no other grounds than

that Jesus came into this world as the Word of God tells us that He did come, the most rational procedure for us to take is to accept the fact though we be unable to understand the mystery.

CHAPTER VI.

MIRACLES

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you.”—*Acts 2: 22.*

THERE was a time when miracles had a great apologetic value. In order to prove the deity of Christ or the divine character of the Christian religion it was only necessary to open the Bible and point the finger to some passage in the Gospels or in the Old Testament which recorded the working of a miracle. The matter was then closed. There was no more to be said upon the subject. But with the coming of the modern man with his dislike at being shut off from argument so peremptorily and his increased respect for his intellectual powers we are faced with a different situation. It may satisfy the orthodox believer to be able to point to a miracle and say that he rests his faith upon that, but it does not satisfy the inquiring unbeliever, and the duty of the Christian is not to state his belief and close his argument by saying, ‘That is the fact; accept it or not just as you like,’ but rather to “give a reason for the hope that is in him” that the doubter may be convinced and “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing he might have life through His name.” This new situation created by the modern man has several contributing factors. One of these is the place which has been given to miracle by the false systems of religion and by fanatical sects and the Romish church. As soon as a

miracle is adduced to prove the deity of our Lord or the divine character of our religion the man of sane doubts will point out that Buddhism and Moham-medanism and paganism and many other "isms" claim the same sort of support. He will say that there are claims made by the church and by men of the Middle Ages to the same thing, which claims are evidently false. If they are false then it is more than probable that the miracles of the Bible are false also. Another contributing factor to this temper is the high regard for Law which is held by men of a scientific turn of mind. They tell us that the universe is controlled by certain immutable laws, and that what is called a miracle is an infraction or a violation of one or more of these laws. This would produce chaos if it were possible to be done, they say. The conclusion, therefore, is that there can be no such thing as a miracle. And so it is said that the best thing to do is just simply to keep a profound silence on the whole question; the less said about the miraculous element in the Christian faith the better for that faith.

Now, there are one or two observations to be made upon these objections which are raised which might help to clear the atmosphere a little for us. The first is that a counterfeit always presupposes a genuine. If there were no genuine coins there could be no counterfeit ones. If there were no genuine Christians there could be no counterfeit ones. If there were no genuine virtues such as humility, self-sacrifice, beneficence, there could be no sham humility, no mock self-sacrifice, no hypocritical beneficence. It is only because men

recognize the value of the genuine that they wish to imitate or counterfeit it. The same holds true when we come to the question in hand. If there were no such thing as a genuine miracle, it would be impossible to find so many counterfeits of it. It is only because men feel that the true does exist and that it has a value that they attempt to foist the shams upon us. We would reasonably expect, therefore, to find somewhere in the history of mankind such a thing as a genuine miracle. Just where we would expect to find it will appear later.

A second observation which might well be made is that we should have clearly in mind just what we mean by a miracle before we attempt either to sweep them out of existence or to use them as supports for our faith. This very admirable respect which men have for the laws of nature, as they term them, which might perhaps be more accurately called the laws which God has ordained to control nature, inclines to a definition which implies that these laws must either be suspended or violated to make room for the miraculous. If that idea be held then it is only consistent to hold that miracles are impossible. But we are not bound to any such definition. The words which we find in Scripture translated "miracle" have etymologically one of four meanings—a "wonder," a "sign," a "type" or a "mighty work or power." A miracle is defined by Dr. J. D. Davis in his *Dictionary of the Bible* as "in the strict Biblical sense an event in the external world, wrought by the immediate power of God and intended as a sign or attestation." We might say from the terms indicated above that a miracle is an occurrence unique, out of the

ordinary, accomplished or brought to pass through the operation of supernatural power, creating the feeling of wonder or awe in those who behold the working of it, and intended as a sign of authority or position. There is nothing here to indicate that it is an abrogation of the laws of nature.

Another point to be made is that we are not in this place attempting to convince anyone of the truth or divine character of our faith by miracles. Our only purpose is to show the reasonableness of a belief in miracles. Instead of being an appeal to miracles to bolster faith, it is rather an appeal to reason in behalf of miracles. They have their place in our faith, and, while we do not believe that Christianity stands or falls with them, for Christianity is vastly larger than any article of it, we do believe that they are a help and not a hindrance to faith, that they are perfectly compatible with and not an offense to reason.

One more observation. We are to consider only Biblical miracles. Our line of thought will have no relation whatever to non-Biblical miracles, those of false systems of religion, of the Romish Church, or of fanatical impostors. There is a difference as wide as the world between the two classes, and unless that distinction is borne in mind from the beginning to the end, we shall find ourselves ere long floundering in hopeless confusion. We are aware that men like Sabatier and Menegoz hold that there is no distinction. We are also aware that men like Seeberg, Stange, Wendland, Kahler, Meyer, Robertson, Orr, Denney

and others hold that there does exist this wide difference. We incline to the latter view.

The most noted objection which is offered to miracles is that of the philosopher Hume, and of Baden-Powell, which, however, has been exploded and scattered to the winds so completely as to be beyond all hope of recovery. This objection takes the form that miracles are incredible because they are contrary to nature as it was known at that time, and that there was nothing in nature which could account for them, and further "that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." The fact that a certain thing has never been known to have happened in the experience of man is far from being proof that should it happen it would be an abrogation or a violation of the laws of nature. So far as is known communication over great distances without any visible means of connection or of transporting the human voice had never been accomplished. Should we go back but a very few years and make the prediction that in a short time men would be able to hear the human voice or musical instruments at a distance of thousands of miles either with the aid of or without the aid of wires electrically charged, we would have been considered a fit subject for confinement in the asylum. That was contrary to experience but certainly, as we know today, no violation of the laws of nature. It has been accomplished through a larger understanding of these laws. Go back several milleniums and there existed no such thing as a man upon earth. But he appeared in time. That was a miracle. It was certainly contrary to experience but just as certainly not

a violation of Nature's laws. Man came by a creative act of God just as all things upon earth come. Everything new which appears is due to the operation of the supernatural. Is it in violation of Nature's laws? Hardly.

We must remember also that Nature is not limited to the material universe. Earth, water, fire, air with the laws which govern them do not comprise the whole of Nature. Personality is a tremendous factor and one which cannot be disregarded. The laws of personality and spirit must also be taken into consideration when we talk about the laws of Nature. Personality acts and reacts upon the material world about us. And God, the great Spirit, can act upon the spirit of man. Hume's argument is based upon the Deistic conception of the universe, that God is without his world; having once set it a going He cannot now enter into its life. It is governed and controlled by the laws which have been ordained. But this is to make the creature master of the Creator. Wendland in his *Miracles and Christianity* has a passage which is very apposite here: "The modern conception of nature as a self-enclosed system, controlled by strict laws, and directing itself by a purely immanent order," says he, "is entirely lacking both in the Old Testament and the New. There, nature is completely under the control of the Divine will. And in my judgment, this is a view which holds true even for us today. For, even if we have a stricter conception of natural law, yet nature as a whole is ultimately as inscrutable for us as for the ancients. Many ideas as to natural forces have been modified. We no longer

suppose that the winds lie stored in chambers, or that the sun goes forth from his habitation adorned as a bridegroom. But to imagine that nature can really be explained by studying it from the point of view of 'natural law' is a delusion. Nature is no closed system proceeding in accordance with immanent rules; we assume closed systems in this field solely for the purposes of simpler calculation. The truth rather is that nature is inscrutable; it is uncompleted and ever developing anew, open to influences from the human spirit, pervaded and controlled by God. And religious faith will always trace it up to the will of God, will always see in its events the operation of God." Hume's argument which seems upon the face of it so convincing is, in the light of science and experience, today untenable.

We argued in the last chapter that where there existed a motive, good and sufficient for the performance of an act, it would not be considered unreasonable for one who had the power to perform such an act to exercise that power. We may carry this argument over into the subject of miracles, and we shall still find that it is valid and potent. If we study the miracles of the Bible we shall find that there always existed a sufficient reason for the performance of them. We do not find what might be called useless miracles. As the names given them indicate, they were intended as "signs" or evidences of the presence and approval of God. They appear principally at critical times in the history of the people, and are used to teach certain great truths. As Howard Agnew Johnston in his "*Scientific Faith*" has pointed out, the principle of teaching by miracles is

thoroughly in harmony with the scientific methods of pedagogy of this day. We teach the children by object lessons and drawings in order that their minds may the more easily and the more certainly grasp the truths we are trying to instill in them. Israel was a race of children intellectually. The kindergarten method had to be used in training them. Accordingly when a crisis appeared in their history and God knew that He must teach them the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt, He used miracles as object lessons to convey the truth. He gave Moses, as His representative, power over the Nile, the beasts and the insects which the people of Egypt worshipped. There was no other possible way in which He could have shown His people that their God was greater than the gods of their oppressors. Later on in the history of the people a crisis arose when it must be decided whether Jehovah was God or Baal. Baal being the sun-god, or god of fire, Elijah the servant and representative of Jehovah was given the power to call down fire from heaven to consume the offering. Thus God showed Himself greater than Baal by manifesting His power to send or withhold the very thing that was the symbol of the presence of Baal.

When we come to the New Testament and study the miracles of Jesus and His disciples we find that they also employed them as signs to the people of the presence and power of God. Neither Jesus nor His disciples ever performed a miracle to satisfy curiosity. Unless there was some good reason for the performance of the miracle it was not wrought. Jesus claimed to be

the Son of God, to have power to forgive sins, to be able to deliver men from the bondage of their sins. These were things which the people could not see done. He might pronounce one's sins forgiven, but no visible manifestation of the fact was apparent. How could He prove His claims? Just as He did in the case of the man sick of the palsy. When He said to that sufferer "Thy sins be forgiven thee," there arose a storm of protest from the scribes against Him for claiming any such divine power. Jesus answers, "Which is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or, Arise, take up thy bed and walk." The former was easier to say of course, because they could not see whether his sins were forgiven or not, but they could see if he rose and took up his bed and walked, being strengthened in his body and limbs. Then, in order to prove that he did have the power in the spiritual realm, he wrought the miracle in the physical; "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house." After Jesus had departed and His disciples were left to carry on His work, God still gave them this power as testimony to the fact that the Gospel they preached was true. In that age and under the circumstances in which they labored it was necessary that they should have some sort of credential. The One whom they preached had recently been executed by the authorities as a criminal; the message which they had to preach sounded like a wild dream because it was a thing unheard of; they were but few and mostly "unlearned"

men of a subject race. In order to gain a hearing and command any respect they must have some sure testimony. God gave it to them. We do not need it today. Christianity stands upon a solid foundation and its ambassadors do not need to substantiate their statements by performing supernatural works; they have only to point to history and bid men use their eyes and their intellects to see that their message is no myth or delusion. Nor do we need a miracle to attest the divine origin of the Sermon on the Mount, the fourteenth of John's Gospel or the transforming power of Christ in the lives of men during the last nineteen centuries. These stand upon their own merits. Is it asked then, Why do not miracles happen today? The answer is, There is no need for them.

Upon this view miracles are entirely consistent with the power, the wisdom and the love of God. The inconsistency occurs in the denial that God should exercise His power when He had such a loving and beneficent motive as the redemption of man from the awful power and appalling consequences of sin. The Deistic conception of the universe is the most unreasonable and unscientific as well as God-dishonoring view which man can entertain. To conceive of God as so limiting Himself as not to be able to exercise His power at the bidding of His love in behalf of those whom He is pleased to call His children is little less than blasphemous. To suppose that God has shut Himself out from the works of His hands, that He has ordained laws which are greater than Himself, the author of them, is irrational in the extreme. We find this thought

corroborated by Dr. James Orr in his "*Faith of a Modern Christian*" from which we quote: "Miracle in Scripture is to be regarded, not as an arbitrary, capricious, meaningless infraction of the order of nature, but in its connection with this divine scheme, and in subordination to its ends. There is a sparingness and a reserve, a dignity, *ethical purpose and reasonableness* in the miracles of Scripture—a congruity with the teacher and his message—which puts them in a totally different rank from isolated prodigies. They occur generally at great crises in the history of the kingdom of God (the Exodus, giving of the law, conflict of Elijah with Baal, ministry of Christ, etc.), stand in close connection with the great personalities of revelation (e. g., Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Christ) and are wrought for worthy ends. The exceptions to this statement are few, and cannot outweigh the cumulative impression of the whole."

The miracles of Christ are to be taken in connection with the whole of the Man and His life. We cannot take our scissors and excise all of the miraculous and take what is left as an adequate portrait of the Master. We shall have a picture mutilated beyond recognition. And when we do take them in connection with the whole of His life and the Man Himself, we experience no sense of incongruity or of grotesqueness. The miraculous is intertwined with His birth, His words, His manner of life, His works, of course, His death, His reappearance after His death, His departure from the earth after having appeared to His disciples at irregular intervals for forty days. The greatest miracle

about Christ is Himself. He is above any of the works of His hands. His transcendent personality defies explanation even more than anything which He said or did. So then we would expect that such a personality should transcend the material universe in His works. "In the degree that He Himself transcends nature, it is but normal that His acts should do the same. So far forth, then, as the Person who is a miracle works miracles, the conception may be said to be coherent; there is at least, as between its two parts, a certain logical consistency"—so thinks Principal Fairbairn. Let us first be given the explanation of the Person, and then we shall have more grace to listen to the explanation of His works.

When we speak of the impossibility of miracles we should be very cautious as to the language we employ. "Impossible" is a relative term. That which was impossible at one time is now a commonplace with us. We are learning so much every day, the range of our knowledge is expanding so rapidly that it is hardly safe for us to state the impossibility of anything taking place. The truly scientific mind says that nothing is impossible. It says only that certain phenomena appear impossible in view of the knowledge which we have at the present time. Likewise should we speak very guardedly as to that which is contrary to nature and a violation of her laws. What has man with his confessedly limited powers accomplished in this line? Space has been annihilated; time has been seriously discounted; the law of gravity has been perilously tampered with; the air has been forced to yield up its secrets;

even the stars in the heavens are not safe from the ravages of man. We can send messages thousands of miles in a few seconds, not by violating nature's laws, but by discovering and making use of laws which were not supposed to exist. We can challenge the swiftest birds to a race in the air and come out victorious. We can also vie with the fish of the sea. We even know the composition of the stars which shine millions of miles away from us. We take what nature places at our disposal and improve upon it. As Edison and Marconi have worked marvels with electricity so has Luther Burbank proved a wizard in the vegetable kingdom. Are these wizards abrogating, violating, smashing the laws of nature? They are simply making use of them, and bringing forth results by interposing their wills, such results as would never have been produced without that interposition. Now if man, poor feeble man, can, by his increasing knowledge and increasing understanding of the laws of the universe and the interposition of the force of his personality supersede such laws as that of gravity, of magnetic attraction, of germination in the vegetable kingdom and heredity in the animal world, is it not a bit hazardous to say that it is impossible for God, the Creator of all that man uses, and the Ordainer of the physical laws which he thus supersedes, to supersede these same physical, material laws at the behest of His infinite wisdom and redemptive love?

But we are not forced to limit the miraculous to the physical and material. Some have taken a different view and held that a miracle was an occurrence in the

physical world for which no explanation could be made. There are just as real miracles in the spiritual world as there are in the physical and material. Jesus used a physical and sensuous miracle to attest the reality of the spiritual one which he was about to perform and which was of the two in reality the greater. Before He left His disciples He told them that they should do greater works than those which they saw Him do because He went to the Father. We know that they could not do greater works in the physical world than He did. He evidently had reference to the transformations which they were to work in human characters and human lives. And we see the same thing taking place all about us. We see men living in the depths of degradation, in the thralldom of some sinful habit; we see them utterly helpless and powerless to break away and live a better life. Then we see them touched by the influence of Jesus Christ; we see that mysterious power take hold upon their hearts, and lo, they are transformed men, living transformed lives before our very eyes. Those who had once been brutes become gentle and loving. The selfish become unselfish; the deceitful and deceivers become sincere and honest, and we learn to place our trust in them. Miracle of miracles! We need only cite such cases as Jerry McAuley, Sam Hadley and a book like Harold Begbie's *Twice Born Men* for more than enough evidence to substantiate our statement. Such miracles of grace necessitate the interposition of God. They could be brought to pass in no other way.

We return to our observation in the beginning of the chapter, that Christianity does not rest upon the miraculous to prove its divine character. Nor do we rely upon the miracles to prove Jesus divine. Rather do we find the transcendent character of Jesus leading us to expect the unusual, the miraculous. As Nolan Rice Best has so well said in his recent book on *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, "Here once it may have been miracles that proved the Man, but today it is the Man who proves the miracles. Considering how different He is from other men, as the conviction of accumulating centuries more and more attests—as the twentieth century more than all its predecessors appreciates—we can hold it nothing unbelievable that His earthly life began, proceeded and ended with circumstances such as have attached to no other life known to humanity. A person elevated in quality of character and in dynamic of influence so far above the best attainments of the race elsewhere, indexes the presence of vitalities and potencies more transcendently divine than ever centered in any other single life in this world. How reasonable then are the memoirs of His career, which show forth those unmatched forces in unmatched victory over enmity and hate, in unmatched ministrations to evil, misery and sorrow—which reflect the shine of heavenly lights along all the path by which the Master walked His way through the midst of men—which reveal Him dispensing the gracious mercies of God the Father to the poorest and most helpless of all that He met. That radiant story no man could wish to replace with a picture less beautiful. Is it possible

that any man could be happier for replacing it with a record poorer in beneficent power?"

Thus in the *character* of Jesus are we furnished ample grounds upon which to consider the miracles reasonable, and it cannot be said that they form an insuperable barrier to a rational faith. They are thoroughly in harmony with the power, the wisdom, the plans, and the love of God who made the world and all the laws by which the universe is governed.

THE OFFENSE OF THE CROSS

“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”—*1 Cor. 15:3.*

THE most appalling tragedy in the history of the human race is, according to James Denney, the “center of gravity in the Christian world.” Jesus Christ the Son of God has been crucified. The Son of God murdered! How can such a crime become the corner stone of the Christian faith? And yet we are told that it is such. It is the heart and core of the Gospel which Paul preached. In writing to the church at Corinth he tells those Christians that he “delivered unto them first of all,” as being of the most significance, that which he had received, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” The substance of his preaching, then, was the cross of Christ which he makes more evident in his letter to the Galatians when he tells them, “But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.” And what was this Gospel? “Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” If Paul preached anything at all there can be no doubt that it was the cross. And Paul but expressed the sentiment and faith of the Christian world. The Cross of Christ is the keystone of the arch of the Christian faith. Take that away and the entire structure falls to the ground, a hopeless ruin.

And, realizing that fact, some have endeavored to convince us that our faith was but a husk by removing that element from it. They tell us, for instance, that it is, of course, an historical fact that Christ died, but that His death has no more significance than the death of any other man. He was just one of the multitude who have been so loyal to their convictions as to be willing to surrender their lives for them. Aside from a splendid display of loyalty and devotion to principle the death of Jesus has no message. We do not see how any candid and honest mind can make such sweeping assertions in the face of the only record which we have of the fact.

If we go to the Gospels wherein is revealed the consciousness of the Master Himself we find that from the beginning of His public ministry the tragic ending of His life was not far from His thoughts. The voice from heaven which spoke to Him at His baptism gave utterance to words which reminded Him of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah of Isaiah. Soon after this while He is talking with Nicodemus at midnight we catch a gleam of His thought: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life." What did He mean by being lifted up as the serpent was lifted in the wilderness? "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." And then the writer adds the interpretation which He Himself had been teaching them ever since that day of Peter's confession in Caesarea Philippi, "But this He said, signifying by what manner of death He should die." While talking to Nicodemus,

then, at the beginning of His ministry, He was distinctly conscious of the tragic end of His life. Again, what do we gather from His words to His critics when they ask Him why it is that the disciples of John fast and His do not? His answer is unmistakable: "Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. *But days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them and then shall they fast in that day.*" Upon this passage Dr. Denney very aptly remarks that "the taking away of the bridegroom from the bridal party is not the universal experience of man, applied to an individual case; it is something startling, tragic, like sudden storm in a summer sky; and it is as such that it is present to the mind of Jesus as a figure of His own death." While these are only allusions which He makes to some tragic ending of His life, we are not limited to them in our examination of His consciousness. We have several distinct teachings to which appeal is now made? After Peter's confession when the Lord was assured that the disciples had grasped something of His significance, He "began to show to His disciples that He must go up to Jerusalem and be killed." Not once nor twice did He speak of this subject, but three times of which we have record, showing the channel in which His thoughts were moving. If Jesus' words are any revelation whatever of the feelings which were occupying His heart and the thoughts which were constantly in His mind, there is no longer room to doubt that He at-

tached an unusual significance to the manner in which He was to end His work in the flesh.

It is sometimes said that the epistles attach a great deal more prominence to the death of Christ than do the Gospels, in fact, disproportionately so. No one will deny that the central theme of the epistles is the Cross of Christ, but that is far from saying that the Gospels attach little importance to the event. When it is recalled that Matthew devotes about one-third of his record, Mark about one-third, Luke about one-fourth and John nearly one-half of his gospel to the events of the last week of the life of Jesus covering the death and events leading up to it, it will hardly be safe to say that very little prominence is given it.

We need hardly stop to argue that there is a doctrine of Atonement in the Epistles. No one can read these letters from the hands of the Apostles with his eyes half open, and fail to catch the theme of prime importance. Paul has no other boast than the Cross of Christ. His Gospel is summed up in the death and resurrection of his Lord. He finds the answer to all questions, the solution to all problems, the way out of all difficulties, the proof of the love of God, the impelling motive to put sin to death, the underlying ground of all human kindness and service to the race in the Cross. Read Paul. To the Romans; "God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Corinthians; "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Galatians: "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians; "In whom we

have redemption through His blood." Philippians; "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." Colossians; "And through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross." Thessalonians; "Who died for us." Read Peter. "Knowing that we were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold—but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ:" "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh:" "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree." Read John. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins:" "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks in the same vein: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" It is, therefore, perfectly evident that there is a doctrine of an atonement through the blood of Christ set forth in the New Testament. Now the question with which we are principally concerned here is that of the reasonableness of such a doctrine. We are not concerned with the advocacy of any particular theory of the Atonement, but with the Atonement itself.

If we stop a moment to examine the classes into which all theories of the Atonement fall we shall find that no one of them is complete and adequate, but that there is rich truth in each one. There is a profound and a precious truth in the so-called Moral Influence theory, and one which ought to be jealously guarded and treasured, but we have gone but a very little way into the "riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God" when we say that His Son's death presents to us simply a sublime spectacle of devotion to His Father's will, so touching and so splendid as to melt our hearts and draw them to God. We are moved when we thus behold the love of God going to the last ditch, so to speak, to save us, but we do not thus receive the forgiveness of our sins and the adoption of sons. Likewise is there a deep truth in the so-called Governmental theory of the Atonement, but it is not enough to say that God found it necessary to give His Son to satisfy one of the laws by which His universe is governed. In addition to these conceptions which hardly scratch the surface of the subject, we must have some way whereby sin can be forgiven, the lost image of God restored, reconciliation effected between an outraged but forgiving God and the one who has outraged Him. Let us say in passing that the sacrifice on Calvary was not made in order to appease the wrath of God. Reconciliation spoken of in the New Testament is the reconciliation of the sinner to his Father. The cost of Calvary was paid by God, He being the great Sufferer that man might be saved. Only love impels to suffer for another, not anger and hatred. Jesus said, "Greater *love* (not

wrath) hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for" another. We find that way when we grasp the truth that all that justice demands has been satisfied by the voluntary sacrifice on the part of that One who had been sinned against of that which cost Him most, the giving of His Son to bear the sins of man, that man might be saved from those sins and be on terms of peace with God once more. Christ must become a substitute for man. How He accomplished this may be an open question. Scholars of equal rank have found solutions of diverse natures, and it is safe to say that the ingenuity of the learned has not yet been exhausted. To quote Dr. Denney again, "Whoever says 'He bore our sins' says substitution; and to say substitution is to say something which involves an immeasurable obligation to Christ, and has therefore in it an incalculable motive power. This is the answer to some of the objections which are commonly made to the idea of substitution on moral grounds. They fail to take account of the sinner's sense of debt to Christ for what He has done, a sense of debt which it is not too much to designate as the most intimate, intense, and uniform characteristic of New Testament life. It is this which bars out all ideas of being saved from the consequences of sin, while living on in sin itself. It is so profound that the whole being of the Christian is changed by it; it is so strong as to extinguish and to create at once; under the impression of it, to use the apostle's words here, the aim of Christ's bearing of our sins is fulfilled in us—we die to the sins and live to righteousness."

One of the fundamental facts of experience and life is the fact of sin. Very few have had the hardihood to deny the reality of sin as a fact, though a great many have tried to convince us that it is practically a negligible quantity. It has been called by such names as "mistake," "error," "a figment of the imagination," "unfortunate idea," and other terms which would minimize the significance of it. Unless we have an accurate conception of what sin is and what it involves we shall no more see the necessity of an atonement than a dying man sees the necessity of sending for a physician when he does not realize that he is sick. Until we feel that we are lost, we feel no necessity of a savior. Now, if there is one subject that occupies a place of rivalry to that of salvation in the Scriptures that subject is sin, which is involved in salvation. From cover to cover we come afoul of that ugly word or the deed and condition which that word represents. Sin is wrought into the warp and woof of the entire record. It was sin that drove Adam and Eve out of the presence of their Creator. It was sin that made it necessary for God to sweep the face of the world clean with a flood. It was sin which all but destroyed Egypt. It was sin which kept the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for thirty-eight years. It was sin which brought defeat to Israel in battle. It was sin which drove her into captivity. It was sin which took away from her all her former glory, and made her the handmaid of the nations. It was sin which nailed the Son of God to the tree, rent the veil to the temple in twain, covered the face of the sun, and shook the pillars of the earth. Look

where we will in God's word, and we come face to face with sin and its awful consequences. But we turn from the page of God's word to the page of life and experience, and we find the same thing to be true. On every side of us, by day and by night, these ravening wolves of Satan are making life hideous by their howling. Every lock and key; every pistol and rifle; every policeman that walks our streets; every reform school; every prison and penitentiary and court of justice in the land; every committee appointed by Congress to investigate business, industrial and social conditions; practically every law that is passed by our legislatures speaks to us in unmistakable terms of the reality and also of the appalling consequences of sin. And if we, who are living in this day of supreme opportunity as well as national upheaval and international strife, wish further evidence, we have but to turn our eyes across the ocean and behold all Europe still smoldering, where the roar of guns has barely ceased, which sent thousands and tens of thousands of young men to an untimely death and filled once prosperous nations with widows and orphans in dire poverty. Surely the world of men needs to be redeemed. If we look in horror upon these scenes which sin is creating, we with our eyes blurred by imperfection and sin itself, how must a pure and holy God look upon them? Are they not an offense to Him? And are they not sufficient to bring about the necessity of a reconciliation with Him? Sin stands between the soul and its God.

It is not enough simply for us to say that these are results brought about by the operation of natural forces

with which we are powerless to contend, and that evidence of regret upon our part is all that God can reasonably require of us. It is a question of the moral government of the universe which confronts us, and one upon which the governments of the states and nations of earth proceed. There is such a thing as a law of justice which must be met and satisfied, else there is an end of all law and government. No court in the world will acquit a criminal simply on the ground that he is exceedingly sorry that he has committed crime. The majesty of the law must be upheld in order that safety of life and property may be assured to men. The governor who freely pardons criminals without respect to the law or the nature of the crime is an anarchist. Can it be otherwise with the Governor of the universe? Can God freely pardon every sin upon the expression of regret on the part of the sinner without seeing that the sin is atoned for? Certainly not, is the verdict of the reason. Then we may reasonably expect God to demand an atonement for the sin which man has committed upon the basis of the preservation of the majesty of the law, and the assurance of justice to all men. Unless God is to be a God who can be trusted man cannot have for Him a due respect, to say nothing of such love and reverence as prompts to worship, and, unless man can freely worship Him, then He is no God at all. We come then to the conclusion that in order to maintain the place which He occupies in the hearts of men, as God and as King, in order to the preservation of His very being, He must necessarily demand

that atonement be made, that reconciliation be brought about on the basis of justice and righteousness.

We may follow this line of thought along a little further. If God is to be in any real sense, then sin must cease to be, that is, as a dominating influence or power in the world. For, the two, God and sin, being by nature eternally opposed the one to the other, if God is to be the dominating power in the world, then sin must be conquered and be subject to Him. If sin is to be all powerful, then God must be in subjection to it, and by thus being made the subject of sin, He must cease to be. The only method by which sin can be effectually conquered and reduced to a subservient position with respect to God is by the mitigation of its effects upon the race, accomplished by bringing man back to God upon terms of peace through an atonement provided by Himself.

Many of the objections which are commonly made to the Atonement regarded as substitutionary, apply also in other cases with which no fault is found and to which no one raises serious objection. It is claimed, for instance, that the substitutionary conception of the Atonement wrought by Christ is immoral, that it is not righteous nor just for the innocent, such as Christ is represented as being and evidently was, to suffer for the guilty, such as we self-confessedly are. This is a principle which is observable in many spheres of life. The debauched and drunken father of the household suffers less for his sins than any member of his family. What are his sufferings compared with the wife who is forced to live on starvation rations and pass away an

existence of fear, worry, oftentimes of torture and bodily suffering? What are his sufferings compared with those of the children who come into the world bearing in their bodies, minds and souls the penalty of his sins, deformed, idiotic, vicious? The innocent bear the penalty of the guilty. A few years ago the pleasure steamer "Eastland" turned turtle carrying to death over a thousand hardworking men, women and children from the factories who were out for a day of pleasure. Wherever the blame may lie it certainly could not be placed at the door of the victims. They suffered for the sins of carelessness, or greed for money, of those who knew that the "Eastland" was unsafe, and yet kept her in service. It is upon this principle that the world advances, as we shall see shortly.

We may follow this principle into another realm of life and find its working productive of great good to humanity. Many of our noblest virtues are developed through the principle involved in the atonement, that of the innocent suffering for the guilty. An only son is reared by loving parents with care and pains until he reaches the years of maturity. He goes out into the world to mix and mingle with men in business and social relations. He falls into bad company unwittingly. His evil companions lure him away from the path of honor in which he has been trained, and he begins to lead a dissipated and degenerate life. His parents learn of the kind of life their son is living, and they have their hearts pierced through with the sword of grief. The object of their love is a disappointment to them, but he continues to be the object of their love.

As time goes on the boy's wild life brings forth its inevitable fruit. He finds himself in the same condition in which the Prodigal Son of the Master's parable found himself. Now his parents at home suffer with him in their sympathy. The more these virtues of love and sympathy are exercised, the stronger do they become. We find this to be the case, then, that, as we are called upon to suffer, through sympathy, for the sins of others who are dear to us, our own characters become developed and ripen into more glorious ones. We come to the question, Can that be immoral which develops the highest type of character in men? The answer is self-evident.

Let us now lay aside for a moment the Bible doctrine of salvation, not that it is untenable, but that we may return to it later with more confidence. There can be no disputing the fact that the world is saved through progress. Life is written in terms of advancement. Just as the onward flow of the water is necessary to the preservation of its life, so is progress necessary to the life of man and the world. We learn by experience, either our own or that of others; mostly that of others. If we were limited to advancement by our own experience we would go forward but slowly, as our individual experience is very circumscribed. And we progress more as the result of the adverse experience of others than by their successes in life. We arrive then at this point, that the failures, the disappointments, the sufferings of other men become the contributing factors to the advancement and

progress of men, and, therefore, to their salvation. We may apply this principle in any sphere of man's activities. The great liners which cross the ocean laden with priceless cargoes of freight and men, and which are practically unsinkable by the waves alone, have been brought to their present degree of perfection by those misfortunes which came to others. One ship shows a defect in construction, lives are lost, and immediately shipbuilders set about to ascertain the cause of the catastrophe and remedy it. All of the modern safety devices in mines and factories have been bought with the lives of men. We are saved through the sufferings of the innocent.

We may take the principle into the scientific world. How many men have been martyrs to the acquisition of scientific knowledge! Braving volcanic craters, keeping ceaseless vigil by day and by night in the examination of the working of the processes of nature, exposing themselves to loathsome diseases and oftentimes becoming victims to them. They have suffered, and we have entered into their sufferings, and have reaped the rewards.

Go to the social world, and we find that men and women in their love of pleasure and their forgetfulness of the consequences of such a life allow themselves to be borne along by the current of their unrestrained desires. But there is a cataract ahead, and before they are aware of it, they are plunged to destruction. It is too late for them to be helped by their experience, but others who have been going the same path, stop and begin to reflect, and gradually take steps to eradicate

the abuses and corrupt practices that have come to be a part of their life. Our whole social system is permeated by unspeakable abuses. We have only to become acquainted with the facts in regard to such problems as the working and overworking of young children in factories and mines, the starvation wages paid to girls in our stores which contributes so largely to vice, the filth of the tenement and slum districts of our cities, and the evil environment in which the children of these sections are reared, the prevalence of divorce and the cheapening of the marriage relation which is so largely responsible for the breaking up of the home life, to see the extent to which our social order is permeated with abuse and corruption. The alleviation of suffering among these classes and the betterment of the conditions under which they now live have been brought about by the minds of those in better circumstances being stirred by the sufferings of those who have gone before, and have gone down. The present generation, hard though their life undoubtedly is, nevertheless are being saved through the sufferings of their predecessors.

Look now into the moral and religious realm. Every innovator who has become dissatisfied with obsolete methods and ideas and who launches out into the untried seas of endeavor becomes at once the target for criticism and calumny. Most of the reformers of the early centuries also became confessors and martyrs, and through their sufferings the men of their times were lifted to higher planes of vision. The simple fact that a man claims and exercises the privilege of thinking for

himself and advances some ideas which controvert the established and accepted views is sufficient to stamp him as a heretic. All of the thinking has not been done by the wise ones of past ages, but there are vast Americas of knowledge which are awaiting their Columbus to discover them, and bring them to the eyes of the world. Savenarola caught a vision, and had the courage to attempt to lead others into it. He paid for his wide interest and zeal for his fellow men's welfare with his life, but Florence entered into the fruits of his endeavors. Milton was deprived of the sight of his eyes, but the world has been enabled to gaze upon the wonders of the Paradise which he saw through his affliction. Who can forget the name of Livingstone, the man who gave his life to the healing of the open sore of the African slave trade? Livingstone occupies his place of honor in the eyes of mankind today, but he did not receive that honor without paying a terrible price. Through his labors and vicarious sufferings the world has been advanced to a higher plane. For having the courage to protest against the Romish Church compelling its adherents to accept its interpretation of the Scriptures and for declaring that every man has the right to his own interpretation, Martin Luther became the object of persecution, but the world has been led through his sufferings into the glorious light and liberty of Protestantism. Nor need we remain in the realm of the religious and ecclesiastical in order to see this principle at work. Robert Fulton was ridiculed and scoffed at when he suggested that it would be possible to construct a boat with self-propelling power.

Fulton is the father of the great liners that traverse the oceans in face of storm and tempest. Lord Bacon, while out riding one winter's day stepped from his carriage into the snow to stuff the carcass of a dead bird with snow and ice. He contracted disease which resulted in his death, but the world learned that food could be preserved by refrigeration.

These numerous illustrations from different realms of life and experience all press home the one thought that through the sufferings of the few the many are led into fields of a larger service and fuller life, the race advances in its march toward perfection, progressing step by step, using the failures and sorrows of men as stepping stones by which to rise higher and higher until the day when man shall stand triumphant upon the sunlit peaks of success and perfection, and rejoice in the vision of God. Is it unreasonable to expect that God would use the same principle, when He would save the race from its sin through His Son, that He has been using during all the centuries to save it from physical and moral ruin? We come back to the Bible doctrine of the Atonement through the blood of Christ with greater confidence because we have seen that God has not departed from the method which He has used from time immemorial. The Atonement is not, therefore, immoral, it is not unjust, it is not unreasonable and irrational, but is in strict accord with what we know of the character of God Himself.

RAISED IN POWER

“Whom God raised up.”—*Acts 2: 24.*

THE offense of the cross is annulled by the fact that He who died upon the cross has been raised from the dead. Thus does the Resurrection of Jesus take its place as an article in the Christian faith of equal significance with that of the death of Christ. Without the resurrection the death of Christ loses its value, becoming no more than the martyrdom of a conscientious man, and, so far as having any worth as the means whereby man and God become reconciled, it amounts to no more than the death of any other man. The resurrection occupies with the death of Christ the place of supreme importance in the preaching and teaching of the Apostles. The two are preached together always. The first sermon which was preached by an apostle after the ascension of our Lord was that upon the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter being the preacher. The theme of that sermon was, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay; whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” Then, having shown that the prophecy from the Psalms could not refer to David because David did

die, and his body did see corruption, he adds, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Thus does Peter preach the death of Christ as approved by God by the resurrection from the dead which He accomplished. Likewise does Paul make the Resurrection one of the cardinal doctrines of his preaching. The subject of his sermon to the Epicureans and the Stoics on Mars Hill was, "Jesus and the Resurrection." Later on when he was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin he testified that "touching the hope and resurrection of the dead he was called in question," and this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead he based upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus, as he tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians. He even goes so far as to say that upon the Resurrection of Jesus our faith depends. "If Christ be not risen your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins." It is evident then that the Apostles regarded the Resurrection in a very different light from that of a modern minister in New York, who once said, "If the Resurrection of Christ be absolutely disproved, not one article of the Christian faith would be injured," to which the reply was made, "That statement is true, for if the Resurrection of Christ be disproved there would be no Christian faith to have any articles." The church has ever been true to her Lord, then, when she has held tenaciously to this article of her faith, and men have denied Him when they have denied it. The Resurrection is the stamp of approval upon the life and

work and death of Christ. Thereby we know that He hath been approved by God.

When we speak of the Resurrection of Jesus we do not mean merely a spiritual resurrection; we mean a bodily resurrection. A spiritual resurrection goes along with the bodily, but would of itself have been inadequate to accomplish the purpose for man that the bodily resurrection did accomplish. Had it been possible for Jesus to be raised from the dead spiritually, independently of His body, the world would have had no knowledge that any resurrection had taken place, for the disciples recorded that which came within their experience and observation only, and they could have had no satisfactory experience of a resurrection which did not involve the body of Jesus.

It is not difficult, then, for us to see the importance of the physical resurrection of Christ for the Christian faith. The question of the object of our worship is involved. Take away the resurrection and there is left only a dead man as the object of worship instead of a living God, which places Christianity upon a level with Confucianism and all other systems of idolatry. There can be no salvation from sin, and if there be no answer to the question, "What shall I do to be saved," Christianity will go the way of all other religions which have no sure foundation in an eternal God. For, as one has well said, "There can be no salvation unless there be a living Saviour." It is not wonderful, then, that the Christian should cling to his faith in the Resurrection of his Lord, when the giving

of that up sweeps away the foundations of his faith, and leaves him "of all men most miserable?"

The purpose of the present chapter is to endeavor to present such evidence for the fact that the reason of the modern man will find it difficult to deny the reality of that fact and very easy to accept it. If we succeed in furnishing to him grounds for a faith which appear to him to be rational we shall feel that our labor has not been in vain.

We begin, therefore, by acknowledging that there are difficulties of a chronological character which present themselves in the narratives of the event. There are seeming discrepancies which have not yet been thoroughly cleared away. But in view of the fact that four men are telling the story from four different points of view, and none of them making an effort to tell every detail of the event, we should reserve judgment until one appears who can report what took place at every hour of that first Easter day. So far as we can gather from the four accounts which we have the events seem to have taken place about as follows: Jesus was crucified on Friday and buried before sunset of the same day which began the Jewish Sabbath. He remained in the tomb until Sunday morning at a very early hour, for when the women who had come early to render their last service of love arrived at the tomb they found the stone rolled away from the mouth, and an angel in the place of the guards which had been placed there to insure safekeeping. Mary Magdalene takes word to Peter and John that Jesus is not in the tomb where He had been placed, and these two disciples hurry to the

spot where they find it as Mary had told them. Upon examination of the interior of the tomb by Peter the linen cloths and the napkin were found folded, and laid aside, indicating no haste or excitement or violence. In the afternoon Jesus appeared to two of the disciples as they were on their way out to the village of Emmaus, and manifested Himself unto them after having shown to them how the Scriptures had been fulfilled. These two return immediately to the city to bear tidings unto the band of eleven, and while they are telling their tale, Jesus appears in the room with them with the salutation, "Peace be unto you." Naturally the disciples were frightened because they had not yet taken in what their two brethren had told them, but Jesus reassures them and calms their fears with words of cheer. In order to assure them that it was He, He takes bread, and eats before them, and shows them His hands and feet with the nail prints in them. Thomas was absent for some reason which is not given, but was present eight days later when Jesus next appeared to the assembled band. It was upon this occasion that his faith was confirmed and his doubts removed by Christ offering His hands and side to him as evidences of the reality of His presence, followed by the stern rebuke for his slowness to believe unless he had sensuous evidence. The last two appearances took place in Galilee, one by the seaside early in the morning, and the other on the mount, when a large number beheld Him at once. His final appearance came in connection with His departure from earth near to Jerusalem, the scene of His resurrection. This recital does not account for

the special appearance to James and Peter and Paul himself, the exact time of the first two not being clear. This, in brief, is the record of the forty days from the crucifixion to the ascension. A study of the several appearances will show that there was a definite purpose in every one of them. That purpose, however, is not definitely stated in each case, but can be ascertained by a little scrutiny. The appearance to Mary at the tomb in the garden was characteristic of the spirit of the Jesus whom she had known for so many years. His purpose is revealed to us in the question which he addressed to her, "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" If a broken heart could be cheered and comforted it was not too small a thing for Jesus to do, even though it necessitated the revelation of Himself to bring that cheer. Mary was broken-hearted because she had lost one whom she loved. Jesus heals the wound by restoring that One to her. When He would have messengers to take the news of His resurrection to His disciples he chose those who had proved their loyalty by being early at the tomb, the women who loved Him and who were unafraid of the Sanhedrin or the Roman soldiers. Peter was the disciple who had denied Him, and who was doubtless the most despondent of all. He could not free his mind from the awful night of curses and denials. Again Jesus seeks the broken in spirit and the sorrowful, to comfort and to strengthen faith. Two men had had high hopes that Jesus was to be the deliverer of Israel. They had looked to Him to be the promised Messiah, but they had been disappointed. Their minds and hearts were

filled with only one subject. They were among those, who, with Simeon and Anna, were looking for the consolation of Israel. God had graciously satisfied the desires of the old saints in the temple. Jesus now does the same for the younger ones on the road into the country. We should have no difficulty in finding a reason for the appearance to the body of the disciples gathered behind closed doors. They were timid, fearful, nervous, disappointed, despondent. They were to be the heralds of the Kingdom, the bearers of this Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. It was their lot to carry on the work which He Himself had begun. They were to stand before the authorities and powers of the world. They must have a positive message and unshakable grounds of belief, such as would defy persecution and laugh at death. That could only become theirs by seeing their Lord victor over death and hell. Christ gave them all they needed for their faith. The next appearance in the same place was for the special benefit of Thomas, the man who was slow to believe, but having believed his faith knew no change. The appearance on the mount in Galilee increased the number of witnesses to the fact that He had risen, and made the evidence just that much stronger. Peter had received a message of comfort; he now must receive a commission based upon past failure as the incentive to future loyalty. Jesus reminds him in the early dawn by the sea shore of his faithlessness by the three-fold question as to his love for Him, and lay upon him the work of feeding His sheep and His lambs. James is an unbelieving brother. He must be won to become the

head of the church council, the parliamentarian of the band of disciples. Jesus appears to him, and He follows His brother whom before he had refused to believe in. His final appearance on the Mount of Ascension completed His work in the world, and sent His disciples forth with the promise that they should receive power for the accomplishment of their work after the Holy Spirit had come upon them, whose appearance they were to await in Jerusalem. These appearances served to establish the faith of the disciples upon a rock bottom basis. They are for us also evidences of the fact that the tomb was not the last resting place of Jesus, but that He is at work in the world today through His Spirit. No more powerful argument for the Resurrection exists than these post-Resurrection appearances. We are shut up to two conclusions: if He is dead He could not have appeared subsequent to His death; if He did appear, then He is not dead now, since He was raised from the dead, as is claimed in the Scripture record. The alternative is to deny the truthfulness of the record, which begs the question.

The efforts which objectors to the Resurrection make to explain away the fact as we have it recorded for us take various forms. One line of endeavor is to class the Resurrection as a miracle, and then deny the possibility of the miraculous, thereby ruling out the greatest of all the miracles. It is freely admitted that the Resurrection was of the miraculous order. If it can be proved that miracles do not occur, then of course the Resurrection never took place. In fact, the whole subject of miracles is involved, and some make no ef-

fort to disprove any miracle except the Resurrection, for if that falls then all other miracles will fall with it. A brilliant English agnostic once said that it was a waste of time to discuss any miracle other than the Resurrection, for if that were true it would be easy to accept all others, but if it were not true, then all others must be discounted. This is simply going back to Hume's objection that miracles are impossible, and we see no reason to go over the same ground again. The reader is referred to Chapter VI. of this book.

One theory which bears many distinguished names is that Jesus really did not die, but was overcome by His sufferings and the nervous strain of the crucifixion and fainted away; that the disciples worked with Him and brought Him back to life, or else that after a period of time He revived. It is pointed out that it was possible for a man to endure the sufferings of crucifixion and survive them; that Jesus was on the cross only a few hours, not as long as was customary to leave victims, so that there was a greater probability of His reviving than of others. It is only necessary to recall a few facts to show the impossibility of such an extraordinary occurrence. The night before His crucifixion Jesus had been in an agony while in Gethsemane. Such a night in itself was nearly sufficient to leave Him exhausted. He was arrested before daybreak, tried four times, the crown of thorns had been pressed upon His head, He had been buffeted, and scourged by the Roman soldiers, and then forced to bear His cross until He fell completely exhausted. At the time of the Resurrection He had had nothing to eat and nothing to drink for three

days. Taking into consideration His physical condition before He was crucified, and then adding to that the sufferings of the crucifixion itself and the spear wound in His side, it is absolutely absurd to suppose that He was physically able to remove a stone of the size of the one placed by the soldiers in the door to the tomb. Had He regained consciousness while in the tomb, He would never have been able to come out, save by the working of a miracle, which power the advocates of this theory claim He did not possess. Even Strauss denies it in the strongest terms: "It is impossible that a Being who had stolen half-dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to the disciples the impression that He was a Conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life, an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a rescuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death; at the most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, or have elevated their reverence into worship." We need not, therefore, go out of their own camp to quash this theory.

Others have undertaken to show that the witnesses which claim to have seen Jesus after His resurrection are untrustworthy and biased; that they had an "axe to grind" by making up this tale and publishing it abroad. When the question is raised as to the empty

tomb it is replied that the disciples stole the body and hid it, just the story which the guard was instructed to report. It should be enough to say about such an attempt to do away with the Resurrection that it is simply impossible. It gives rise to a number of questions which its advocates have found difficulty in answering. Upon what grounds can it be said that the witnesses are untrustworthy? Their records are simple and clear-cut accounts with no attempt whatever to embellish or deceive. What possible purpose could they have had in foisting such a deception upon the people? It would only serve to bring them into ridicule and make them the objects of persecution by their countrymen. How can the earnestness and zeal of the disciples in preaching the resurrection be accounted for? Surely no one can be so insane as to give his life to that which he knows to be a lie. How can the movement which we know as Christianity today be accounted for upon this theory? Such a mighty power cannot be built upon a lie.

The other most common theory at large is that the disciples thought that they saw Jesus, but they were subject to hallucinations, and that which they thought they saw was only a vision. Professor Schmeidel has advocated the Vision Theory in preference to all others. But Professor Schmeidel has never given a satisfactory answer to the difficulties which his theory has created. He has never told us when five hundred or more people had the same vision at the same time. That is most certainly contrary to experience and the laws of visions. Neither has he explained just how men in the

mental condition in which the disciples were at that time could have that sort of a vision. La Touche has some very interesting remarks upon this subject in his *Christian Certitude* which furnish food for thought for the Visionists: "The principal conditions for vision seeing are time for the visions to arise, and a state of mind, ecstatic and unbalanced, which is favorable to the adoption of convictions without critical examination. Neither of these conditions existed in the case of the disciples. The Resurrection took place on the third day after the crucifixion, and all the appearances, with one exception, were completed within forty days. The disciples were depressed and despairing, never dreaming that they would again see those sacred features or hear those well beloved tones on this side of the grave; and, finally, when a great number of them were gathered together, they saw the Lord. Nothing is more remarkable in the whole history of Christianity than the dull perceptions of the disciples; they persisted in their unspiritual and material conceptions of the Kingdom of God even after the Resurrection was an accomplished fact; and they were sufficiently unexpectant, after they had heard of four distinct appearances of the risen Lord, to be terrified when He appeared to them on that first evening, and attempted at first to account for the phenomena by this very theory of visions, or hallucinations, for they 'cried out, thinking that He was a spirit.' This fact, that the Ghost Theory occurred to them, and that they tried to explain some of their earlier experiences by it, is a valuable testimony to the normal state of their minds when they saw the

Lord, and ought to commend their witness to those who are still attempting to account for the appearances by this theory. These facts demand serious explanation, not mere verbal trifling.”

Another attempt of the rationalistic order which is of more recent invention is that of Keim who makes use of the advance in the new spiritualism to account for the appearances of Jesus after His death. Keim thinks that instead of being visions which the disciples had that they were spiritualistic communications from Jesus which were so vivid as to appear real to the disciples in their mental state. Inasmuch as Keim's view has not appealed to any large number of inquirers it need not detain us here. It is purely an effort to find some means of accounting for these post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus other than that which the Bible states.

So much for the negative side of the subject with its efforts to discredit the Scripture account of the Resurrection and the post-Resurrection appearances. We will now turn our attention to the constructive side, and see what can be offered in support of the records as we have them.

There are a number of facts which lend credence to the narratives and serve to establish the reasonableness of the claims which are made with reference to the events which occurred during those forty days. The first of these facts is *the naturalness and simplicity of the narratives*. It is absolutely impossible to find any trace of external influence or efforts at embellishing the facts with details which would suggest that some-

thing was being kept back or more was told than really happened. The accounts as we have them are artless statements of facts as seen by eye witnesses with no comments or remarks on the part of the author. If the records were the work of a forger or an inventor it would have been psychologically impossible for him to have given them to us as we have them. Many of the details serve only to raise questions in the minds of thinking men, and it was without doubt evident to the writer that such would be the case. Why, then, were these details not omitted altogether, or else changed so as to give the impression of consistency? The simple answer is that the writer wrote as he saw and as he knew the facts to be, regardless of what effect his record might produce on men's minds. There is a consistency and a harmony in the four accounts, but it is below the surface and must be searched for in order to be found. If one was trying to convince men that the story he was telling was true and he were to tell it from the standpoint of four men, he would tell it in such a way that men would be able to see the harmony in all the different accounts, and would have to search diligently to find any discrepancies. We find just the reverse to be true in the accounts of the Resurrection, which tells us plainly that the writers reported just as they knew the facts to be. When we read these Gospel narratives the impression is made upon our minds that the writers were telling the truth whether they thoroughly understood the significance of their records or not.

The authors were telling what they believed to be the truth. The next question is, *Were these men trust-*

worthy witnesses? Can their statements be relied upon? Were they in possession of real facts or not? Were they mentally capable of discerning the truth? A candid mind will not fail to credit these men with being men of intelligence after reading the Gospels and epistles which they have written. Although often spoken of as ignorant fishermen, they were nevertheless intelligent men and honest. While it is true that they were at this time very much disturbed mentally, they were not unbalanced, as is shown by the fact that they were careful to have their own reasons satisfied before they accepted any of the stories which were told them. More than this, it cannot be said that their expectations were the father to their belief of the facts, for they were the slowest and dullest of any set of men in their comprehension of the facts, before and after they took place. When the women came and told them that Jesus was risen their reports "seemed to them as idle tales." When the two came from Emmaus and told them that Jesus had appeared to them, their story was discredited. When Jesus appeared in the room as these two were telling their tale the group of ten were frightened, thinking that it was a ghost they saw, and would not be convinced until Jesus showed them His hands and went through the act of eating before them. Thomas had to see the nail prints, and thrust his hand into the spear wound before he would believe. His appearance was so unexpected and so unlooked for that it required positive and repeated evidence to convince these men that it was really He. It was not until after they had tested the stories which were told them,

and had indisputable proof of the reality of Christ's presence that they wrote their records. Such was the honesty of these men.

A third fact for which no satisfactory accounting has been made by those who would get rid of the Resurrection is *the empty tomb*. That the body of Jesus was not there cannot be denied. If it had been it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the enemies of the new faith to produce that body, and silence all talk of the risen Jesus. The fact that they did not produce it is sufficient evidence that they were unable to do so. To say that the disciples stole it throws us back on the theory of fraud which has been spoken of above, and which we have seen to have been an impossibility. Neither does the swoon theory account for it satisfactorily, for we have noted that Jesus would have been physically unable to remove the stone, and come out of the tomb. That empty tomb in the garden of Joseph of Arimathaea has ever been a thorn in the flesh of the negative critics.

Another fact is to be noted in connection with the disciples themselves and their behavior. That fact is *the psychological and moral transformation which took place in these disciples*. Immediately after the crucifixion they are a band of dejected and despondent men; men who felt that they had espoused a lost cause, had given up their whole lives and livelihood to one who had ended his life upon a cross. As they looked out upon the future there was only gloom and black despair ahead of them. They gather together behind barred doors as sheep huddle together in presence of danger.

Within a few weeks they are out in the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming boldly the Resurrection of Jesus: they are cast into prison and commanded to keep quiet about such a mischievous doctrine, but they continue to preach when they are released. They go out into the highways, and join themselves to strangers, and proclaim the Resurrection. They meet persecution cheerfully and with joy. What has taken hold of them? How do we account for this remarkable change in such a short time? When were men willing to endure torture and privation for that which they knew to be a fraud? Men do not so easily lay down their lives. The proposition is simply preposterous and unthinkable, and must be dismissed from consideration by any one who is thoroughly in possession of his mental powers. The sudden transformation in the disciples is impossible under any other supposition than that they knew whereof they spoke, and that they were in the hands of a living Christ unto whom had been given all power in heaven above and in earth beneath.

A further fact which furnishes indisputable evidence to the fact of the Resurrection is *the change in the Lord's Day from the seventh day of the week to the first*. From the creation of man to the Christian era the Lord's Day was observed on the last day of the week, based upon the fact that God rested from His labors of creation on that day. Beginning sometime during the days of the Apostolic Church the day was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. We read of the assembling of the early church members for worship upon the first day of the week; Paul en-

joins the Corinthian Christians to lay aside their gifts for the Lord's work upon the first day of the week: it was upon the first day of the week that the Apostle John was in the spirit when the Lord spoke to him and told him to write the things which he saw and heard. The earliest extra-Biblical records show that it was the universal custom for the Christians to meet upon that day in their religious assemblies. Thus without any definite or concerted agreement the Lord's Day was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. Now, when it is remembered how tenaciously the Jews held to their forms and ceremonies and ordinances, what a profound reverence they had for the established institutions and customs of their race and religion, regarding as a supreme offense any effort to change or lay aside any of these institutions, it can be seen, in fact must be seen, that something unprecedented had taken place, and which they regarded as of the utmost significance. The most reasonable supposition is that that extraordinary event was the Resurrection of their Lord, which the apostles asserted took place upon the first day of the week. Nothing less than that could have induced those Jews to change their age-long custom; that custom was changed; the Resurrection or something of equal or more importance occurred; the Resurrection is the only thing of which we have any record, and is sufficient to bring about the result mentioned. The most rational explanation, then, of this change of the Lord's Day from the last day of the week to the first, is the Resurrection.

A final fact of great importance must be mentioned which seems to us to rank in importance with the ones mentioned above though less seems to be made of it in the works which have been consulted. That fact is *the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world today*. Before His death Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit upon the disciples to lead them into all truth, to comfort and strengthen them, to be the constant companion and inspiration of their lives. After His death and before His ascension it is said that He bade them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come upon them when they would be given power to accomplish their mission. The record of their work and their conduct after the day of Pentecost gives unmistakable evidence of the presence and power of the Spirit within them. And, if we study the history of religion since the days of Christ until the present, we cannot fail to see that there is some hidden power accomplishing the mighty work and far-reaching results which are being brought to pass. Now, if a father is about to start upon a journey and promises his child that when he arrives at his destination he will send him a certain present which he names and describes, and if, after a few days, the mail brings to the child just that present which had been promised, it would be safe to conclude that the father had reached his destination, and had fulfilled his promises to his expectant child. The case is analogous to the one under consideration. If we are logical and honest, the only rational conclusion is that Christ has arrived at His destination, and has fulfilled His promise to His disciples.

Verily the crucified Jesus has become the risen Christ. Our faith is not vain. We are not yet in our sins, and, instead of being the most miserable of men, we are the most joyful, for we have an Advocate with the Father, One whom God hath raised in power and glory, even Jesus Christ the righteous. We glory in the fact though we bow before the mystery which will be seen through only when all things are revealed.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”—
1 Tim. 3: 15.

HAVING followed Jesus from His entrance into the world to His departure therefrom we come in this study to the institution or organization which He left to carry on the work which He had inaugurated. Before He left His disciples He told them that it was for their good that He should leave them, but He did not imply that He was to abandon the work which He had been doing and allow it to crumble to dust. It is true that a great many do not agree with the opinion expressed, who do not hold that Jesus founded any such institution for the continuance of His work, because they do not hold that He ever began any definite and specific work to be carried on. If our point has been made in the foregoing chapters it is not necessary here to argue the question. Our object is simply to address ourselves to the rationale of the Christian Church, and endeavor to show that it has a place in the Christian Faith.

Did Jesus intend to found a church? And did He in fact found one? If we can show that it was His intention to do so, and that as a matter of fact He did so, then we may assume that there was some good reason for it. We can learn the intentions of any one both by his words and by his deeds, or rather by the correspondence of the two. When Jesus found a man

who would acknowledge that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," He felt that He had a foundation upon which to build something. What that thing was He tells us in the reply which He makes to the confession of Peter. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in Heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my *Church*." There can be no mistake about His meaning. It is plain sailing so far as the institution to which he referred is concerned, and has been so understood by men of every century. Moreover he referred to the Church as if His purpose in the founding of it had already been carried out. In speaking to the question of the relation of a man to a brother who had sinned against him, he indicates three steps in the procedure which are to be taken; first, go and tell him his fault privately; second, if he refuse to hear when spoken to privately then take two or three witnesses and speak to him; third, if he still persists in turning a deaf ear, then tell it to the *Church*. How could it be told to the Church unless the Church were an organization in existence? Besides these two direct references to the Church under that name, he refers constantly to it under the name of the Kingdom—the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. In the Gospels the name Kingdom is used 112 times, the Church twice. While it cannot be said that the terms were used absolutely synonymously, they do refer to an organization of some kind to carry on the work which He had commenced. The Kingdom seems to have been a

larger term, being a state or condition which was to be brought about by the operation of the Church in the world. This kingdom was to have a small beginning in the world, as the Church had: it was to grow gradually, spreading out and permeating every phase of society, as the Church has: it was to be made up of men from every nation and tribe, as the Church is today: it was to make progress and spread in the face of persecution and hardships, as the Church has done and is doing today: it is one day to cover the whole earth when the will of God shall be done as perfectly as it is done in Heaven by angels: its mundane existence is to be terminated by the second coming of Jesus, when the Church here shall become "the General Assembly and Church of the first-born" in Heaven, receiving the crown of glory which follows inevitably the cross of shame.

That He intended this society to be a distinct organization is shown further by the fact that He left two sacraments which were to be administered to its members, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the former to be a sign of the cleansing and pardoning of sin, the latter of the member's intimate communion with the Head of the Church. These two ordinances are practiced in no other organization upon earth; they are distinctively of the Church. He also commissioned His disciples to carry the evangel of this Kingdom or Church to the farthest parts of earth, promising them power in the Holy Spirit to accomplish their work, and assuring them of His presence with them to protect and help.

In consonance with this conception of the purpose of Christ the Christian world has ever recognized the existence of the Church in all of its creeds and formulas of worship. "The Apostles' Creed is not peculiar in giving expression to belief in the Church. All the great creeds of Christendom include the Christian Church as one of the integral features of the Christian religion. Its importance is acknowledged in the Nicene Creed, and in the Athanasian Creed. It has its place in the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans, and the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Christians of every land and time have felt that their creed would be incomplete without a declaration concerning their loyalty to the Church of the Living God," says Dr. Jefferson of the Broadway Tabernacle, New York. Is it possible that the best people of all ages, the closest students of the Bible, the Word of God, those in closest sympathy with the spirit and work of Christ should be mistaken about His purpose? It does not seem reasonable to think so.

Christ's relation to His Church which He has founded is a very intimate and a very unique one. Where this society or institution is spoken of in the Gospels as the Kingdom, Jesus is constantly spoken of as its King. He is the one who rules and governs it, who enunciates its laws and principles, who signifies its disciplinary commands, who shall eventually lead it to victory over its enemies. In the Epistles where it is spoken of as the Church, His relation to it is set forth under different figures. He is the Head of the Church,

which is His body. He is, therefore, to the Church what the head is to the human body, its ruler, its guide, its wisdom, its glory. He is also the Bridegroom of the Church, which is His Bride. What, therefore, the husband is to the wife, Christ is to the Church. He is its lover, its protector, the object of its love, its strength. The Church is the darling of His heart, His possession, His charge to keep. He has bought it with His blood; He gave His life for it; He sanctified it that it might be holy, "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, a glorious Church." The writers of the New Testament have bankrupted language in their efforts to set forth the intimate relation which exists between Christ and His Church; its King, its Ruler, its Guide, and Leader, its Wisdom, its Savior, its Lover, its Shield and Defense, its Purchaser, its Sanctifier. It would be a wonder of wonders if these men who spent three years in His school, receiving His instruction and breathing in His spirit and absorbing His hopes and ideals were to exhaust their vocabularies as they have done in their effort to show the relation of their Master to something which He did not intend to establish and which had no right to exist. Is it possible, not to say reasonable, to suppose that sane and sensible men, such as these disciples undoubtedly were, could make such a colossal mistake or be guilty of such a base imposture?

The constituents of this Church come from all races and classes of men. So far as the writer knows it is the only institution which welcomes men and women from all walks and conditions of life without distinction. There is no bar to admission on account of age, both

young and old finding a place: there is no bar to sex, its members consisting of both male and female: there is no bar to social conditions, both rich and poor, obscure and famous, those stained with sin and the purest of the pure come together on equal terms in its worship and service: there is no bar on account of nationality or race, neither Jew nor Gentile, English nor Chinese, American nor African, has exclusive right to membership. The Church is the most cosmopolitan institution upon earth. These members of different social standing and various nationalities are described as being saints—not sinless, but men of faith—as “beloved of God,” the objects of the love of the God of all the earth; as “the called,” the ones whom the voice of God has called out of darkness to the light of a Father’s home; the “elect,” the chosen ones; as “brethren,” those united by the ties of brotherhood, spiritual kinship.

What are the characteristics of these “called,” “beloved,” “elect,” “saints,” and “brethren?” We may say that the characteristics of them as ideal are very different from their actual dispositions and lives. If we read the “Manifesto of the Kingdom” in Matthew, where Jesus outlines the qualities which the members of that Kingdom are to possess, we find that they are to be “poor in spirit,” “meek,” “hungerers and thirsters after righteousness,” “merciful,” “pure in heart,” “peacemakers,” “the salt of the earth,” “the light of the world.” If we turn to the Epistles we find them described as lowly, meek, long-suffering, forbearing, loving and lovable, harmonious and peaceful, tender-hearted, forgiving, truthful, pure, hopeful, patient,

sincere, joyful, sympathetic, hospitable, faithful and of faith, unselfish. Truly a glorious ideal, but sad to say the actual falls far below the ideal. The members of this society do not do so now, and never have lived up to the requirements which its Founder and its earliest preachers outlined for them. When we come into contact with them in every day life we find that many of them are proud and haughty, brewers of trouble and dissatisfaction, unlovable and unloving, hard-hearted and unforgiving, impatient and insincere, unfaithful and impure. Yet, in spite of the fact that many are so, we nevertheless find more good people who are the salt of the earth in the Church than in any other one, or in all other organizations upon earth. The ideal is not too high, but is in accord with the purpose for which the Church was founded by Christ and the work which He intended that it should do in the world.

What now was that purpose and what the function of the Church? What is its business in the world? What is it here to do? If Christ founded it, and gave laws for it, and trained leaders for it, and gave it a commission, and made promises, what object did He have in view? That answer may be expressed in few words. He founded the Church to continue to do the work which He began to do. That work we have seen (in chapter on the Incarnation) to be to destroy the works of the devil by taking away sin out of the world, to save sinners from the power and guilt of sin, to reveal the Father and to impart the abundant life to those whom He had thus saved and to whom He had revealed the Father. These several purposes may be

summed up in the one word, to redeem the world from sin to righteousness. The object of being salt in the earth is to preserve and keep fresh the earth, to prevent it from moral and spiritual decay brought about by sin. The object of a light is to dispel the darkness and guide the traveler, to scatter the darkness of ignorance and superstition caused by sin, and to show the sinner the way that leads to the Father's home. It is true that the Apostle describes the Church as the "pillar and ground of the truth," the depository of the truth and strength of the truth, but it is that only because it is the truth which makes men free, free from the bondage of sin. So that all of these minor purposes work toward the supreme purpose of the redemption of the world. Christ came to save the world, to redeem the world, and if the Church is to do the work of Christ, its purpose is to redeem the world. That is the only business which it has here. That was the commission which Jesus gave it; that is what He trained its leaders for; that it is what He promised to give it power to do. When the Church turns aside from this supreme purpose and function to anything else, it is failing to fulfill its mission, and will die a natural death. Just as Israel of old, whom God had called to be a light to the Gentile nations, turned aside from its God-given mission, and instead of leading them to God became like them herself and her light was snuffed out, so the Church will be cast aside by God when she turns away and fails to do her work, because she has chosen some lesser thing to do.

The method which she is to use in the accomplishment of this task is the method which Christ used when he began it, the three-fold method of preaching, of teaching and of healing. Wherever He went in Galilee or in Judea He preached and taught and healed, and so must the Church do.

Now the great work which Christ did was to preach. He used the synagogue or the hill side as His pulpit, or the rim of an old well, or the moonlit garden, or the inner court of a private house. Wherever He went He always found some place which He could employ as a pulpit, and He preached to the people. He was a master of the homiletic art, and never lacked an audience. The people hung upon His words, whether He was preaching to a multitude or to a single individual, and they were amazed and astonished and pricked in their consciences, and their deepest emotions were stirred up within them. The great work of the Church, following in the footsteps of her Master, is to preach. Whatever method is employed preaching must come first. The theme of all her preaching is to be Christ, His life, His death, His resurrection from the dead. It is by the foolishness of preaching that the world is to be saved according to the good pleasure of God. What, then, is preaching? It is simply the holding up of God as He is revealed to us in the face of Christ constantly before the consciousness and conscience of men to the end that their wills may be convinced and moved to accept God as their personal God and Christ as their personal Savior. So, then, the supreme method

which Christ used is to be the supreme method which His Church is to use—preaching.

But the work of preaching was always supplemented by Jesus by Teaching. He was never in a hurry to leave any soul or any city in doubt. After He preached He taught. By His teaching He enlightened the eyes of His pupils, He established them firmly in the truths which He had preached. He was not content to cast His seed upon the ground where the birds might pick it up and carry it away, but He took the pains to plant it deep in the earth where it might germinate and bring forth fruit. Likewise the preaching of the Church must be followed up and supplemented with teaching to the end that the truths which have been presented might be burned in upon the minds of men. She must teach men the great truths about God, His Fatherhood, His love, His grace, His providence; about the soul, its value, its culture, its destiny, its immortality; about sin, its nature, its author, its consequences; about salvation, its purpose, the means whereby it is accomplished, what it costs, what it leads to; about duty and our relation to it, and the relation of it to our destiny; about Christ Himself as the revelation of the Father and the Savior of men. The fundamental truths and eternal verities of the Christian faith are to be instilled by faithful and constant teaching. The second great method, then, which the Church is to use in the doing of her work is the didactic.

Jesus used a third method which the Church has been more or less inclined to neglect. Certainly she has not employed it in anything like the same degree in which she has employed the other two methods.

And yet Jesus did a great deal of His work, and spent a great deal of time in healing men's diseases. How often we read of Him touching sightless eyes, and giving vision; laying His hands upon some miserable body racked with pain, and making it whole; speaking a word and bringing the dead back to life. This great power which Jesus possessed of healing men's physical diseases by a touch or a word, He used constantly along with His preaching and teaching to win men to God. His "rise, take up thy bed and walk" was ever followed by His "go, and sin no more." But the Church has not this miraculous power to heal that her Founder possessed, it is said. There are many Christian leaders of sane judgment who say that the Church today does have the power to heal the sick. Certainly she has the power to minister, etc. She has the power to minister to the temporal and physical needs of men today just as truly as He had in His day. The Church has a work to do concerned with something other than the souls of men. She must also give heed to their bodies, because her work is to redeem the whole of man, body, mind and soul. The vast fields of endeavor which are open to her in the healing of the social diseases of men she cannot turn her back upon, and say that she is concerned only with the souls of men and nothing more. So far forth as she turns a deaf ear to the cries of those women which are bound down to a life of practical slavery by the social order as it exists, and of those men who are but parts of a machine, and those children who spend their days in factories and homes of squalor and moral corruption, mute though their cries may be, she is passing over the great opportunity which comes to her to reach the souls of men by ministering to their

bodies. It is a grand thing to reclaim a life that has been ruined, but how much grander it is to prevent the blighting of that life by providing a healthy environment in which it may develop. No State Board of Health in the country confines its efforts to the saving of men and women who have been stricken down with disease. That is the small part of their work. The great work which a Health Board is called upon to do is to remove the causes of diseases. They must know what cause lies back of the epidemic, and exert all their efforts to eradicate that cause. Then the epidemic will be wiped out. The Church is the spiritual Health Board of the world. She cannot confine her efforts to the saving of those who have been infected with moral and spiritual poison, but she must seek the causes which lie back of that poison, where it finds a place suitable for generation. When the Church makes the saving of men's bodies an end in itself she has turned aside from her work; but where she ministers to the physical needs of men in order that she might gain access to their spiritual needs and minister to them she is but following in the footsteps of her Founder, and employing His method. The Church must be the leader in all movements for the uplift of mankind. She cannot be satisfied with following the leadership of some other institution. Her place is at the front. "I believe," says Dr. Brown in his *Modern Theology and the Preaching of the Gospel*, "that the leaders of the Church ought to be leaders in every movement for moral and social uplift, and that they are qualified to

become such” for three reasons: “In the first place, the Church has access to the largest number of people who are open to moral influence. In the second place, it has command of the ultimate religious motive. And, in the third place, it is of all institutions the most free from conflicting interests.” That which is morally and spiritually uplifting tends toward the salvation of man, and, inasmuch as the salvation of man is the purpose for which the Church was founded, she ought to commit herself heart and soul to that.

If, then, the Church is to accomplish the task which has been entrusted to her care, namely, the redemption of the world, she must proceed along the lines of Christ holding faithfully to that three-fold method which He employed, and using them in their proper relation, preaching first, teaching second, and healing third.

In concluding this chapter we wish to address ourselves to two or three questions which are sometimes raised and which press for an answer.

The first of those questions is concerned with the necessity for such an institution as the Church. Why is a church necessary? If religion is a matter between the soul of the individual and its God, then what is the need of having such an institution? That question is answered in part by the nature of man. Man is a social being. He does not care to live alone even if it were possible for him to do so, which it is not. No man liveth unto himself, but his life is bound up with the lives of men on every side of him. He is dependent upon a thousand men for the clothes that he wears and

the dinner that he enjoys. No man can live an isolated life for any length of time. His nature cries out against it. He craves the society of others, especially those of kindred spirit. We inevitably seek out those whose sympathies are in harmony with ours. If we have high ideals we seek as companions others who have like ideals. If we have sordid conceptions of life we gravitate toward those of similar natures. If we are religious we naturally draw close to those who are also religiously inclined. The irreligious man does not as a rule seek the company of the religious one, and vice versa, unless it be to help the weaker. So then, even if Jesus had never founded an institution such as the Church, his followers would naturally have been drawn together and would have set up some sort of society. Their natures would necessitate it. Another answer to the question is found in the fact that all great work which has to be done is done by men working together. The work which Jesus began would never have been carried on by Christians working separately and individually. It would soon have ceased to be. Only by the power gained from unity and co-operation is it possible to do anything worth while in the world. In unity there is strength, in co-operation there is increased power. All men in other spheres of life recognize this principle. The wonders that are being wrought in the commercial and industrial world are made possible only by men uniting and organizing their work. Organization means simply order, system. A machine is an organization. How much more effective is a locomotive than all of its component parts unorganized!

How much more effective is the church organized and ordered than would be its constituent parts unorganized! The necessity for the church consists in the increased efficiency which comes from co-operation and organization.

Another question which is often asked, but which has not as much reason to back it as the first, is, What good does the Church do? An institution is justified in existing only by the good which it does in the world. We do not suppose that anyone who is at all conversant with the work of the Church and with the results which it has accomplished would ask such a question, but the reason why it is asked at all is that there is so much yet to be done. Men look out upon the world and see all the corruption and rottenness which is filling the air with its stench, and they cannot see what is being done. Their nostrils are so filled with the foul that they become unresponsive to the sweet. A sufficient answer to this question is simply to point the inquisitor to the lands where the Church has been but a few years or has not yet been planted, if such a place can be found. Compare Christendom with heathendom and there can be no question as to what good the Church is doing and has done.

We pass, therefore, to the third question which presses for an answer, and which is often urged as a criticism of the Church; Why are there so many different denominations in the Church? If the Church is one and all Christians are laboring toward the same end, what is the use and what is the excuse for so many different denominations? We may freely admit that sectarianism

has done a great deal of harm to the cause of Christ in the hard feelings which have been engendered, the quarrels which have marred its history. We acknowledge these; we also deplore them. But they do not form sufficient grounds for the amount of criticism which is directed against them. When men and women of different temperaments and different ideas separate themselves into social and business groups; when men of brains and intelligence differ so radically in their political views as to form half a dozen or more different parties in our own country; when one set of men prefer a government such as Germany has, another set such as Russia has, and still another such as America has; when all these things are taken into consideration is it any very great wonder that one set of men should prefer one form of government in the church and another set of men should prefer another? The various denominations of the Christian Church are due chiefly to the different temperaments and preferences of different men. Each denomination has its own peculiar work to do. The various sects are like the various members of the body. When all do their own work there is harmony, there is co-operation, there is progress.

Another question which is probably more serious than any of the foregoing is that respecting the character of the members of the Church; Why are there so many imperfect men in the Church, men whose lives are anything but righteous? The Church claims to have power to transform men's lives, yet we see many in the Church who have not been transformed. Again

we must admit the truth of the criticism which is embodied in the question. There are a great many in the Church who are a disgrace to the name of her Lord. But such a situation is inevitable owing to the very constitution of the Church. The Church is constituted of imperfect men because there are no perfect men from which it may draw. When a society opens its doors and issues an invitation to all men to come in, and accepts their word as to their qualifications, there must of necessity come in many who are not worthy. The Church can not read the mind and heart of those who seek entrance into its membership. It can do no more than accept the profession of their sincerity and purpose to live true to the Christ. This state of affairs was foreseen by Christ when He founded His Church, for He says plainly that there shall be among the wheat many tares, and that they must remain until the day of the harvest when the separation will be made by those who cannot be deceived by outward profession but are able to read the hearts of men. The Church "is not in the world," says Jefferson, "to make a show, but to do a work, and, instead of counting up her blunders, let us at least occasionally think of the miracles which she has wrought in Jesus' name."

How, then, does the Church justify her place in a rational Christian faith? By the fact that she has a work to do in the world which no other organization has, and that that work is of supreme importance, in fact, the most important work to be done in the world, because it is concerned with the things which

are eternal, the redemption of the world from the sin into which it has fallen unto holiness and God-likeness now and forevermore.

LORD AND MASTER

“My Lord and My God.”—*Jno. 20: 28.*

THERE was one disciple of our Lord's who was in many ways a type of the modern man of the twentieth century, of the man to whom the chapters of this book are addressed. That disciple was Thomas. We are accustomed to speak of Thomas as “The Doubter.” He is called the doubting disciple, and oftentimes he is not regarded as of the highest type of man. While he is not placed in the same category with Judas, he is nevertheless regarded as of inferior quality to the other ten. Such a conception of the character of Thomas is far from the truth. It is unfair and unjust to him to call him in scornful terms “Doubting Thomas.” Thomas was simply a man who was slow to believe, and slow to believe because he was not satisfied to accept everything on its face value. When he was told by the other members of the band that they had seen Jesus, and that their Master had risen from the dead, Thomas expressed an unwillingness to believe their statement until he had made further investigation; he must see and examine those wound-prints that he knew would be in the hands and side. The other disciples did not believe when they were told that Jesus had risen. They regarded the stories of the women who came to them with the glad tidings as “idle tales.” It was not until Jesus appeared to them in the upper room

and they beheld Him that they believed. Was it not natural, then, that Thomas should demand as much evidence as they had demanded? And he was just as ready as they to believe when he felt that he had sufficient proof, in fact, when, after eight days, Jesus again stood in the midst of the disciples as they were gathered in that quiet retreat, and he beheld those evidences for which he asked, he gave expression to the grandest confession that has ever fallen from human lips. True we are thrilled by that noble confession of robust faith which Peter made in Caesarea Philippi, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." True there are no sweeter words than fell from the lips of Mary Magdalene as she stood by the empty tomb on the first Easter morn when she recognized that familiar voice which spoke to her, and she wheeled about with the cry, "Rabboni, my Master." But neither of these confessions equals that of the man who was slow to believe, and yet when he did believe, cried, "My Lord and my God." Peter's tribute to his Lord gave expression to the deity of Jesus, that between him and God there was no difference, since he was His Son. Mary's startled cry manifests her acceptance of Jesus as her teacher. But Thomas declares that this Jesus whom he had followed was not only in truth the Son of God, but that He was henceforth *his* Lord, and because his Lord, then *his God*. It is the cry of personal surrender. Peter's was sublime but impersonal. Mary's was affectionate and personal, but not so noble. Thomas' was both sublime and personal and affectionate. Thus the man who is the type among the disciples of the modern man of this

age has given us the grandest confession of all. And we believe that he is also a type in this respect, that, just as he became a devoted worshipper and ambassador of the Christ when he once believed, so our modern men, when once they see that the Christian Faith is a reasonable faith, they will accept it and measure up to the obligations which it imposes upon them.

In our preceding chapters we have endeavored to show that there is in reality no conflict between the Reason and Faith, because they are both God-given qualities of every man, and each has its own function to perform; that by the faithful performance of that function we are to arrive at the full truth, each contributing what it has been able to gain in its own sphere of activity, the one supplementing the other. That Jesus is without a peer in the realm of moral character is a fact which has been acknowledged without hesitation by men of all beliefs and of all ages. The agnostic, the infidel, the rationalist unite with the evangelical Christian in proclaiming Him to be without a rival there. He has presented to the world the only absolutely sinless character, free from stain of sin. Very rarely has anyone had the courage to charge Him with any moral defect. Not only so, but He is acknowledged to be the greatest Teacher the world has ever seen. No other among the world's bright and profound intellects has placed the world so much in his debt for the matchless precepts and sublime teachings which he has proclaimed as has Jesus, the Man of Galilee. Others have spoken profound and beautiful truths. We give honor freely and unstintedly to whom honor is due.

But after all has been said that can be said for others, men have ever acknowledged that they take a place far inferior to that of Jesus. So far the Reason of man has experienced no difficulty with the Christian Faith, but upon the next article which we discussed many have stumbled. We endeavored to show that deity could be ascribed to Jesus within the bounds of reason, nay more, that it is unreasonable not to ascribe it to Him in the light of the evidence which we have at hand. The man who accepts the New Testament as true and accurate will find no difficulty whatever with this article of the Christian Faith. The New Testament is unintelligible upon any other basis. Jesus and the supernatural are inextricably bound together. There is no separating the two without tearing the whole of the New Testament to shreds. To the man who is not willing to take the New Testament view we appealed upon other grounds, chiefly the verdict of history. As we look at the tremendous power which Jesus has in the world today, in the spread of the Kingdom which He came to set up, in the power which He has to transform the lives and characters of individuals and nations we are forced to admit that only by the power of God can such results be accomplished. The great proof of the deity of Christ is His presence and activity in the history of men and nations. As Dr. W. A. Brown says, "Jesus is the central figure of human history, numbering among His disciples men of every age and of every land, the common meeting ground of civilizations and of races," and again, "to Call Jesus Messiah is to assign to Him a place in the larger drama of history. He is not an isolated figure who comes to us out of the clouds without rela-

tion to the past or to the future. He is the centre of a progressive revelation which began with the dawn of human history and will not be complete till all mankind own His sway and conform to His ideals. He is the expression in individual form and under particular historic conditions of what God purposes for humanity everywhere and always." If, then, Jesus is divine in the sense in which we have stated, that there is no distinction between Him and God, we come to the miraculous birth from the womb of a virgin with greater confidence. That birth is in consonance with what we know of Him and of His entire life. It is the most rational explanation of the entrance into the world of God, of one who lived such a life and exhibited such a character. The miracle of the birth would be naturally followed by the miraculous life. Instead of a miracle being a violation of a law of nature we find it to be simply the superseding of a law which has been ordained by the One who ordained that law. Instead of being the servant of His own creation we are taught by the miracles of our Lord that He is their Master as well as ours. The supreme miracle we find to be in the Resurrection, which we saw to be but the seal of God upon the death of His Son. The death of Jesus involving the question of the atonement for our sins is the means which God saw best to use to accomplish the redemption of man from the power of sin. The principle is the principle which we find at work all about us in our every day experience. It is by the innocent suffering for the guilty that the world is being saved apart from the atonement made by Christ. God, then,

used a principle which He had always been using, and which He continues to use for the salvation of man. The Resurrection is the evidence that the atonement which Christ made was accepted by God, and we find no single event in history which stands upon such a solid foundation as does this. The greatest difficulty is experienced by those who would deny the reality of this transaction, not by the ones who put their faith in it. The Christian Church we have seen to justify its place in the world, and in the creeds and faith of the men of all ages by the fact that it was founded by Jesus, that it would have arisen inevitably by reason of the nature of man even if He had not founded it, that it has a great work to do in the world, a work unique and transcendent, and that it is in truth doing that work in the face of many difficulties.

It is an undeniable fact that opportunity creates responsibility. The man of great opportunities is also the man, by reason of that fact, of large responsibilities. We cannot drink deep at the fountains of knowledge without having the demand made upon us to put that knowledge to use in scattering the darkness of ignorance. We cannot sit at the feet of any great teacher without having the obligation imposed on us of giving to the world that which we have received. Christ spoke a great truth when He told His disciples that inasmuch as they had freely received, they must freely give. No one can come into contact with a great personality without having the demand made upon him to live a better life and a nobler life. Who can read the life of a man like Martin Luther, or David Livingstone, or

Raymond Lull, or Francis of Assisi, or Robert Murray McCheyne, and not feel that he is called upon to live a larger life of service to his fellow man? Any great ideal which is presented to us creates the demand that we make that *our* ideal. We have been facing during the course of these discussions *the* great fact of life, the fact which every man has to face at some time or other, the fact of Christ. It is not possible to face that Fact and treat it with indifference. A demand is made upon us, and the Fact must become a fact for us, or else we must reject it, which means neither more nor less than that Jesus must be taken into the heart as He is represented in the word of God to be, the Savior of the individual and of the world from sin, or else He must be rejected. There is no neutral ground. There was none for Thomas, and he sought none. As soon as he came face to face with the fact of the risen Christ that Christ became for him his Lord and his God. So must it always be. We have been face to face with the fact that Jesus was the best man morally the world has ever seen, that He was the peerless Teacher, that He was the incarnate deity, that He came into the world through the operation of the Holy Spirit, that He wrought many wonderful works for the good of man, crowning the beneficent work of His life with His vicarious death, that after three days He rose victor over death and the grave, that He is in the great movement which is pressing forward in the spiritual warfare to establish the kingdom of God upon earth, and, therefore, not a dead Christ. If He be all of this then there is no escape from the fact that He calls upon us to be

the followers of Himself. Unless we become such there is no reality in any profession which we may make. "There is no reality," says Carnegie Simpson, "in your assertion of the dogma of the Divinity of Jesus unless you mean that for you Jesus is that which only God Himself can be. If He is not this, the orthodox formularies are mere verbiage." We must become Christians, that is, those who bear the name of Christ. And, to quote the same author, "We cannot become Christians unless we will say to Jesus, most literally and unreservedly, 'My Lord.' But we simply ought not and must not say that to any creature. If we say 'My Lord,' we should be able to add with the honest Apostle, 'My God.' The Christian who will not maintain his Lord's Godhead must find it hard to maintain his own self-respecting manhood."

If we, therefore, do that which we must do, there will come to us certain specific obligations. We will find it not only necessary but also a joy to worship Christ, to love Him and to serve Him.

First, we must worship Him. It is not enough simply to admire His matchless character and to imitate as far as we be able the example which He has left us, and to shape our lives by the truths which He has taught us. We must also come to the point where we bow before Him in humble worship. When men in His own day came into contact with Him and recognized His divinity they instinctively fell down at His feet, and we do not find that He forbade them to do so. God must necessarily be a Being whom we worship, else He is no God at all to us. This is one of the great duties of

life, and one to which we sometimes pay little attention. We are living in such a rushing age, in a time when things are ever on the move, when men feel that they have no time to stop. Worship is considered a waste of time. We must be up and doing. Yet the great word which comes to us from the Old and the New Testaments is that above all things we must worship the Lord our God. The need for this is seen in the fact that we invariably come to be like that which we worship. The nature and character of the object of our worship determine what sort of a nature and character we shall possess. If we yield our allegiance or offer our worship to any less than God then we begin to deteriorate. The only means whereby we can become Godlike and Christlike in our characters is by making God in Christ the object of our worship. What is required of us is that we shall be the possessors of characters which bear the impress of Christ. We can fulfill that requirement only in the way just stated.

The second specific obligation imposed is really involved in the first—love. The inspiration of true worship is love. The sense of worship is sometimes created by the feeling of awe; oftentimes by the sense of fear, as is the case with the heathen and pagan. But inasmuch as we are neither heathen nor pagan there is a higher motive than either of the two named; namely, that of love. We do not necessarily worship that which we love, else we were idolaters; but we must love that which we worship. And if love enters into our relation with Jesus, that relation must be a very personal one. As said in a previous chapter it is only the man whose

heart is open to love who can be persuaded to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Master. The most convincing arguments to prove the deity of Jesus will prove absolutely futile with the man whose heart is sealed. When we thus enter into this personal relation which is expressed by love we then are in position to say with Thomas, "*My Lord and my God.*" The word which above all others expresses God's relation to the race of men is love; "God so loved the world," "God commends His love to us," "Brethren, this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." The word which above all others expresses the relation of Jesus to men is the word love. "Who loved us and gave Himself for us," "Having loved His own, He loved them to the end," yes, to the bitter end. And so the response which must come from the heart of the believer must be in the same language in which the demand is made—the language of the heart expressed in terms of love.

The third specific obligation grows out of the second. Christ made the test of love to be obedience. "If ye love Me, ye will keep my commandments." The only way that He could know that His disciples really and truly did love Him was by the fact that they were willing to obey Him. And obedience to Christ means that when He says, "Come!" we come; when He says, "Go!" we go. Our lives are to be laid upon the altar of service to Him. So, then, as love is the inspiration of worship, service is the expression of love. We are not to be the recipients of the blessings which come to us so freely from the hand of our Master without rendering

some return for them. Christ truly says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," but He also says to us as He said to His disciples just before He left them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The command is as absolute and as binding upon us, as the invitation is gracious and the welcome assured. Christianity is the religion of service if it is anything. Jefferson has so well said that the Church is not on dress parade, but is engaged in a mighty warfare. She is not to be admired and petted; she is to be the ministering servant to all men. Jesus intended those who were to bear His name in the world to do just the thing which He had come to do. "As the Father hath sent me into the world," He says, "so send I you." Those two little words, "as" and "so" tell the story of Christianity. Those who are to be followers of the Christ are to be really followers, walking the very path which He has blazed for them, and that path will invariably lead them in the service of their fellowmen. The Christ upon His knees with His loins girt about with the towel is the picture of the Church He has founded. She too came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give her life a ransom for many. Words and professions are empty and hollow, but deeds are real. So then "let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth." We worship that we might come into close communion with our Lord and receive spiritual strength that we may go out from Him inspired with love for Him and for our fellow men to give our lives in service to them as He Himself did. This three-fold obligation, then, is in fact of a piece,

we worship because we love, and we show that we love by the fact that we serve.

Our object throughout these chapters has been to present the Christian Faith as rational with the ultimate purpose of leading men to see the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and to give them a firm foundation for their faith. Our prayer in closing is that that purpose may be accomplished, and that many who have been in search of the truth, but who have not up to this time found it, may have their difficulties removed, and enter into the larger and happier life of faith as children of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Master.

T H E E N D

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01019 6717